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LADY MAKE-BELIEVE

BY

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CHAPTER I.

THE OLD GRAY THING APPEARS

OCTOBER 7.

SISTER MINE:

It's happening! It's getting cruelly wider every second. I'm not looking, though—and I'm not going to. The big whistle keeps blowing like a deep drum-note prolonged. The crew would say it's a signal that we've started—but it is n't. It's just a contrivance of sound to make me realize how I absolutely adore all the people I thought I just liked.

I'm in the smoking-room. That seems bad for a start. But I'm not smoking. I'm swallowing—you know, Sallie—one of those insoluble lumps attending the departure of steamers. At first, when the people outside began kissing and sobbing, I imagined I could bear it; but presently I saw a woman take another one's hand, look quietly into her eyes, and just turn away. Then I bolted. This was the first door. I thought I could cry a little, too, because there was no one here. Just as I began comfortably, I spied an old fellow over in the corner. One silly little sob had gotten out, but I choked back the others. He wheeled around and has n't moved since. He's staring through a port-hole as if he were watching the scenery—and he can't see a thing. I wish he'd stop. It looks so idiotic. There's not even a cloud.

He's a big, gray creature with a soft flopping hat. The blurred

glimpse I caught looked somewhat old and ugly; but he might be thirty from the set of his shoulders. There's an air to the back of his head as though he were gritting his teeth. Maybe he is. Maybe he's trying to forget something, too, and came in here to be away. Perhaps I ought to go.

I changed my mind about going. There was a grimness to the back of that head that held me. I stopped writing and tried to hold mine the same way. I'd love to learn to steel myself against things like that. As the boat slipped on down the river, the soft gliding motion seemed to creep into me—a dreamy drifting, as if nothing made any difference; as if I were a dream, and he were a dream. Before I realized that I was going to do it, I got up and went a step nearer.

"Did you come in here," I heard my own voice saying dully, "to avoid partings and irritating people?" Silence. More silence. Then, without even turning around, he remarked:

"Yes."

"So did I," I replied in the same tone. "But you got here first. I'll leave."

"It is not necessary," he answered. "Dere are four corners to de room."

I am now, Sallie, naturally, in the diagonal corner—wondering. His odd little accent is puzzling. His big gray tweeds look English. And his frankness was delightful. Of course I did n't say any more. I merely came over here, back to my letter. Englishmen are quite as indifferent as that, and they do wear gray tweed. But they don't speak with foreign accents. Oh, Sallie, we're going faster!

Well, we've had lunch—all sorts of boat things and rather anæmic bread. I forgot to eat much. I was throwing all my force into being interested in the people. I won't be blue, my dear, I won't! I'm going to be cheerful and happy, if I have to push myself around with my own hands.

The passengers came in like characters in the first chapter of a novel, and I wondered who would play the leading part. Opposite to me sat a man, big and ugly, with a mouth chewing so incessantly that I could n't tell the shape of it. The hero, most probably—as he looks like the villain. I heard the steward say that he's English. I've searched all around for the funny old fellow of the smoking-room, but can't find him. The big Englishman is the only person anywhere near his size; but he's not old by a good deal.

To my amazement, I found that the handsome man at the head of our table is the Captain. Funny that I should have drawn a place next to him! I heard the lady on my right whispering that those things were

arranged beforehand. But of course they would n't pick out a stranger who did n't care a rap where she sat and give her the place of honor. It's just chance. The two ladies next to me are from the West. One asked for a glass of water with an r that rolled all around the pitcher and came back to her to be in the next word. Of course the boat shook, and I poured some water up her sleeve. To smooth it over, I told her to pass the other arm and I'd fill that.

The ugly Englishman opposite stopped chewing for a second and smiled—really quite a human smile that changed his whole face and made him look less ugly. Heroes always do that.

A little further down on his side is a preacher with a collar and a kodak. A few other things too; but you overlook them. The collar is so roomy and so coyly independent of his neck. I'm itching to draw palings on it. It would make such a dear little garden fence. And I do wish you could see his smile. I can't decide whether it's to coquette with the old maid next to him, or to keep the collar on.

The big, ugly man glanced at him once, then back at his meal, his expression as savage as if the plate had purposely mixed up his lunch while he was n't looking. Then he stared furiously at his fork and gave his napkin a jerk that took the starch out of it. I'll never dare speak to him. I could n't endure being withered. I should n't be surprised, Sallie, if the man's an editor. I picked up the passenger-list to guess at his name. It was among the first—Bickmore. I'm as certain of it as if he had been formally presented.

I talked a little to the Captain. He's a fine-looking man, splendid physique, and a charming twinkle in his blue eyes. He and the Western ladies had already met outside, so things were n't so stiff. I'm going to get this ready for the pilot boat, and then take a stroll on deck. Perhaps I can locate the funny old codger of the smoking-room. Somehow, I liked him. Tell me, Sallie, do I sound as if I had started right and were being sensible? Don't worry about me, old girl. I've formulated some theories about troubles and things, and I'm going to work them out. I'll write every day on board. It helps so to talk to you. Good-by, dear. I think Philadelphia is out of sight now; but I don't know. I have n't looked back once. That's part of my theory.

I hope the house won't seem too lonely. And, Sallie, child, when you get up to light the fire in the morning, be sure to put on your slippers. There's no use taking cold because I'm not there.

Dear me! The whistle blew again, and the smoke came swirling out of the great stack like the genius from the mouth of the fisherman's bottle. As it swept out paler and broader above me, I could see in it you and Mamie and Cousin John sitting in a row. But I just waved my hand, Sallie, figuratively—and smiled. I've swallowed that lump. I wonder if the Old Gray Thing has swallowed his!

CHAPTER II.

ENTER—THE EXASPERATING PEGGY

I WATCHED the frail little pilot boat come close to the big steamer; saw the pilot swing down a rope-ladder over the restless water, then step safely in with the men. Next they caught a bundle of letters lowered over the rail; and I watched them row off right into the sunset to the sail-boat waiting—the last link with home! I'll never forget how it looked, black against the gold. The sky grew more and more like a great morning-glory, all purplish pink with yellow dust sprinkled through and through. My scarf came undone; but I was too absorbed to notice it. One end flapped in the face of somebody next to me. It was my old man in the big gray overcoat.

He started angrily, and put up his hand to brush it off. Before I caught the scarf, the other end floated across my own eyes. When I finally did see and tried to apologize, there was his back just as it was in the smoking-room. I began to think that perhaps he was a paper doll and did n't have any front.

Evidently he does n't like people, and of course he must have his own reasons. It's one of my theories, you know, that we ought to single out the people we bore, and let them alone. Then we could growl more luxuriously over those who bore us.

I confess, though, I did try hard to see his face. But he stood there staring straight out at the gold-dusted sunset and never moved an inch. I wonder where he had his dinner, cross thing! I suppose he ate it in the smoking-room.

O best of sisters, what a night! No, not ill—worse! The sea is calm and lady-like; but— I forgot to tell you about Peggy. She's the person I've drawn to spend twelve days with. A person with a face like a well-risen flour muffin; a person fat, resolute—and I opine that she's been somebody's cook. She's got the lower berth. And she snores!

Our beds are made of rubber and blown up. I lay all night, like the whipped cream on top of some jelly, praying for courage to stick a hat-pin in Peggy's mattress and let her down, to bump on the slats. I even felt maliciously under my own to see if steamboat slats were hard enough to keep her awake. Then, luckily, I remembered something I once saw written in a cramped hand on the bottom of an upper berth in a New York steamer:

My wife, myself, and my three daughters are passing the night in this room, July 18. . . . D——!

I like the arrangement of the sentence. It's so resignedly forceful. I said it over to myself slowly several times. It's a soothing sentence.

The only vacant cabin on the boat is a suffocating inside one; but Peggy seems to fancy closed port-holes and blazing hot lights, so I thought maybe it would n't be cruel of me to entice her by some *fawked* guile to move out of this one and take that. But how proceed, I wondered. I was savage enough at the moment to lie there in the early dawn and prepare a mental list of things to annoy cooks on holidays. If I 'd only had the forethought to bring with me an alarm-clock set to buzz off remindingly at a quarter to five.

Now it's time to dress for breakfast; but I feel more like going to bed for a good night's rest. I had made up my mind, Sallie, to be so brave and happy and giddy and interested in everybody. But I did n't expect it to be—quite like this. She's polite and clean and has the right of any one going first-class, yet somehow—oh, it's no use trying to hide it from you—it's sort of humiliating to be paired off with a cook. Of course it was mere chance, and there must be view-point that will make it bearable. I'll go up on deck this morning, stretch out in a nice steamer-chair, and finish being tired. Maybe I can think more calmly and charitably out there in the daylight when I'm not hearing her snore.

Something interesting has happened. This is n't it exactly; still, it's part. That Mr. Bickmore did n't speak at breakfast; but he smiled again. It's such an improvement that I racked my brain to encourage him to keep on. The Western ladies were extremely clever and bright; but a sense of humor did n't seem to be his long suit. Finally I told about the queer old man in the smoking-room, and how furious he was when my scarf brushed him. The Captain commented: "What an awfully rummy old chap, was n't he?" with that charming English intonation. Mrs. Delancy and Miss Allen (they are the Western ladies) had n't seen any such person on board. Mr. Bickmore ate his breakfast ignorantly. Once I caught his eyes fixed on me with a most peculiar expression. They are gray, and there's something very direct about them. Then he got up abruptly and left the table. The Captain said it would be a "bally nuisance" to have him sit there for twelve days without a word. But perhaps the poor man's ill; that's enough to make any one cross.

Now for the interesting thing. It was at lunch-time. Somebody asked why I was going abroad. Of course I had to answer at random, so I just laughed carelessly and said, "To improve my mind." The Captain and Mrs. Delancy entered into the spirit of it and offered to begin helping me at once in any way they could. Then, to the astonishment of everybody, Mr. Bickmore looked up from his cold beef and announced solemnly:

"It is to Italy you should go, den, if you would wish to improve your mind."

Oh, Sallie, that accent! The Old Gray Thing of the smoking-

room! The angry man with my scarf in his face! Why had n't I understood? It was as clear then as our back-yard when we open the shutters and look out in the sun. There were the shoulders—in a different color, it's true; but so big and strong that they could n't have belonged to any one else. And I had had the audacity to talk about him at breakfast under his very nose!

You know, dear, when you dash headforemost into a corner like that, all you can do is to swing around quick, back up against the wall, and be sarcastic.

"Thank you very much," I thrust as placidly as I could, "but I have *been* to Italy." His answer was one word—just one, Sallie, charged with that deliberate English inflection:

"A-o-u——?"

Was n't I an idiot to give him the chance? But I tried to smile good-naturedly and told him that now, in this state of pitiful ignorance, I had to pass through England on my way to Paris. I finished up with:

"And are n't you going to be generously instructive like the rest—*Mr. Bickmore*?" I should n't have done it if he'd been old and pitiful, as I first thought, but he's just stepping into the best of his manhood, and he can take care of himself. There was a faint tinge of color and a little note of irritation that I hardly expected:

"It is not my name—*Bickmore*!"

I endeavored to appear surprised, and declared that I had been rather proud of selecting it from the whole list. Another flash of those direct eyes, as though he were trying to fathom something.

"No," he remarked slowly; "my name is Richard Graham Spottswood. Why do you choose *Bickmore*?"

There I was jammed up further in the corner, and I knew it. But when you're in Rome, you've got to fight the Romans, so I blurted out the truth:

"Because you look so cross—except when you smile!" I wished I had been seasick and had had to stay outside. Then I tried to smooth it over with something utterly irrelevant. I asked if he had brought with him more than one pair of shoes. I never saw a man turn so red, as he inquired why I wished to know.

I explained that, being the largest person on board, his would probably be the heaviest; and I wanted to borrow one to throw at my cabin companion when she snored. Without moving a muscle, he agreed to do what he could.

The parson with the kodak left the table, the fatuous old maid following. The Captain's eyes were so twinkling that I was wild to know whose discomfort he was enjoying most. Of course, beneath my desperate efforts to appear indifferent, I knew what a little fool the big Mr. Spottswood thought he had drawn opposite to him; and I could n't

help flushing at the memory of the sob he heard me stifling in the smoking-room.

I was n't feeling particularly elated when I came to my cabin to-night. Peggy rose up from her mountain of covering, her round, shining face circled with curl-papers. It seemed to me she had them under her chin.

"Miss Meldrum," she announced, "there 's a package arrived for you. It 's on your berth; and there 's a note too, ma'am." If she had remarked, "The butcher 's sent the beef-steak, and put in his bill," she could n't have been more cooky. It almost made me forget to wonder who on the sea had been sending me things. I took down the bundle. Out rolled two ponderous shoe-trees.

The note was directed to Miss Barbara Meldrum. He was a better guesser than I. It said:

The heaviest things I had. Hope you may find them of service.

R. G. S.

Could the wretch have a sense of humor, after all! Could he have pictured this very scene—me in my guilt facing Peggy! But, ah, no! He could never have conjured up anything half so ridiculous as that round hub of a face and those paper spokes.

Of course she had read the note. Servants usually do. It was not sealed. And—ah ha! all this time it had kept her awake! A fiendish joy seized me. The villain's revenge should be my salvation! Perhaps she would spend a sleepless, snoreless night—wondering!

I undressed with my back to her and my mouth filled with pins. If I had n't— Oh, Sister dear, it's comforting to find that other people are foolish, too. Maybe everybody 's got something to forget and is being silly because of it. I believe I 'm going to sleep to-night. Anyhow, I 'm sure of one thing—I don't at all know why—but, Sallie, I 'm cheered!

CHAPTER III.

THE KING OF SIAM WISHES TO TAKE LESSONS IN ENCHANTMENT

OCTOBER 9.

I CRAWLED upon my jelly last night, soothed, courteous, confident of sleep. Did you ever try to fall asleep abruptly? It seems to open a back door in your brain and start a sort of rummage sale of thoughts. You 'd positively give away ideas to be rid of them. I began to drop them down for Peggy.

"Miss Maloney," I asked (her name 's Kate, but Peggy 's more picturesque), "have you noticed that slender young man in blue with the astrakhan cap, who walks so much and never speaks?"

"Him of the heavy red eyebrows? Yes, ma'am. I was just thinking of him. I believe he's a very nice gentleman, ma'am, from Cork."

Good! I was rid of the eyebrows. But that Cork had come out drowsily. I must incite her to wakefulness at any cost.

"Have you ever read Carlyle, Miss Maloney?" Perhaps she would be bored by my erudition and go into the inside cabin to-morrow.

"Not much, ma'am—a little of the 'French Revolution.' The very thought of it puts me to sleep." I had such a sinking feeling that I was sure she had stuck a pin in my mattress.

"Miss Maloney," I demanded—I had her now—"do you speak French?"

"Oui, Madame, un petit peu. J'ai parlé avec le——"

"Wait a minute," I gasped. "It's too hot in here. I've got to open the port-hole."

You know, Sallie, I've never read half the "French Revolution"; and all I understood was "*Oui, Madame.*" I no longer wanted to go to sleep. I wanted to hear Peggy snore. I climbed back determined not to eject her, but to keep her in there to educate me. Had I hit upon the only two things she knew? Or had she been in a position to have to—— Then it came to me! Why, of course, Sherlocko, she had been dusting in a library.

"You have read aloud a good deal, Miss Maloney, have you not?" I ventured.

"Yes, ma'am."

Oui, Madame, I thought, and the other maid was French. Peggy had not been cooking. Then, Sister, I forgot her; I was so busy applying a theory. Here I was planning to be wretched and sleepless cooped up with somebody's maid. All I had to do was to appeal to her *maid-en-ly* instinct, pretend she was my own domestic, and travel in style.

I was talking to that Mr. Spottswood about it just now. He came up to ask in the driest way if I had murdered Peggy. I was rather surprised at his coming. He's very reserved. Once during the course of our conversation he looked so confused that it startled me. I was saying, "You see, so many things are merely make-believe. Now, for all I know, you may be the King of Siam, with that charming accent. You may be just sitting here calling yourself Spottswood, and trying to fancy that I'm not boring you to death." For a second he seemed perfectly nonplussed; then he smiled rather nicely and expressed envy of my imagination. Perhaps he's really worrying over something, so I just rattled on. You know, dear, one can be diverted by the nibbling of a mouse.

He inquired whether Peggy had kept me awake the rest of the night. I told him how I had finally resorted to whistling as an antidote. The

"Suwanee River" worked a charm; but "Mavourneen" turned on a shower-bath of wide-awake, home-sick tears.

Of course I had to climb down and comfort her. The room was freezing cold by that time. I hooked myself to the side of her berth like a soap-rack, and patted her here and there. I don't know a thing about Irish homes; but I made believe that they were beautiful, and she said it was true.

Then she told me of herself. For twenty years she was maid for a dear old, blind lady in Baltimore, who has just died. Peggy used to read to her. Sometimes she had to speak French to the butler. Is n't it simple?

When I climbed back, she got up and tucked me in with her hot-water bag. I felt very selfish. This morning she offered to fasten my dress, and reached outside for my shoes. It's her maid-en-ly instinct, of course; but how odd that it should crop out before I had even laid my plans!

It must have been mental telepathy. Mr. Spottswood thinks so, too. He admitted, reddening a little, that the man to whom the name Bickmore belongs happens to be in the cabin with him. He's going to whistle "Mavourneen" to-night and see if it will enchant him into a valet. He would like the sensation also, and does n't want me to get ahead of him.

You know, Sallie, there's really something restful about a sea trip—even if you don't sleep.

CHAPTER IV.

"ALL AT ONCE AND NOTHING FIRST"

OCTOBER 9.

AFTER lunch to-day, Mrs. Delancy, Miss Allen, and I came up on deck together. The steward has arranged our chairs in a row under the bridge, as if he knew instinctively that we shall be friends. Perhaps they have a way of pairing off people who sit near each other at meals. The Captain's seat is there, too, with Mr. Spottswood's down by the corner.

We were late. All the other passengers had staked their claims, beginning just across the little open space from us. I wish you could see them stretched out in a long unbroken line, not merely as people resting, but as people determined to lie down—heads back, arms folded, and legs incased in red and yellow robes. It looks as if some one had wandered down an aisle of the Campo Santo with a can of war-paint.

Dr. Cook—that's what we call the real Mr. Bickmore, who goes swaddled to the teeth in furs—was on the end, already asleep. He comes up after each meal, and retires into his blankets, with nothing

left out to listen for the next dinner-horn but the tip end of his nose. I should n't care for him for my valet.

I made a mistake when I said all of the passengers were reclining. Mr. Spottswood, I noticed, as we were coiling ourselves up like the rest, was standing at the rail quite close to the man in the astrakhan cap. It was the first time that I've seen Him of the Eyebrows speak. What he was telling must have been either of unusual importance or of unusual interest; for The Old Gray Thing seemed to have dropped his habitual reserve, and was listening as one positively hypnotized. Presently the red-headed man shot a fleeting glance at us and made some remark in a lower tone. Mr. Spottswood looked around and saw us for the first time. There was an odd, almost uncomfortable expression in his eyes as he touched his cap, froze up again, and turned back toward the sea.

I was just beginning to weave a deep, dark mystery out of what was probably a discussion of trunk-checks, when I was very pleasantly diverted by the Captain's steward, who came up to my chair holding a red sofa-cushion. On it lay a book which he presented with marked ceremony. I opened it and glanced at the headings. It was Herbert Spencer on the Unknowable, the Knowable, and Ultimate Scientific Ideas. Of course it was the Captain's first effort to improve my mind, so I accepted it and sent a message of deep appreciation.

To quiet those two girls next to me, I turned the leaves at random and began reading them snatches aloud. Presently I came to a treatise on motion. I'm going to copy a few lines, because in a moment we had such an impressive adaptation of it that I am now a devotee of Science. It starts thus:

Another insuperable difficulty presents itself when we contemplate the transfer of motion. Habit blinds us to the marvellousness of this phenomenon.

"For instance," interrupted Miss Allen at that point, "note Dr. Cook! Could any one fancy the waves of air emanating from the mouth of a mere dinner-trumpet having the power to stir from its present coma that chloroformed Sphinx?"

This led to an animated discussion as to whether waves of air blown into a dinner-horn are of equal force to those that come out, and, if so, why does not the horrible thing sail from the steward's hand into space, when we were once more diverted; and this time by a frantic yell from around the corner:

"Clementina! Oh—she'll be drowned—I know it! She'll jump in and be drowned. Somebody catch her—quick!" Over the brass step of the companion-way plunged the old maid who sits next to the Parson. Half of her hair was tightly crimped, and half of it—alas—

was not! She wore a striped petticoat, sky-blue dressing-sack, and flying ribbons. Beyond her was scampering a lovely little, bushy-tailed gray squirrel. "Wait—oh, please wait!" screamed Miss Titcum in hot pursuit.

But Clementina had either dreamed of acorns in the steerage or studied geometry, for, with not a fraction of deviation, she flew on in a bee-line toward the head of the hibernating Dr. Cook. Only a second did she pause on his face, then skipped to the next, and the next. All at once, and nothing first, the Campo Santo sat up—or, rather, screamed up; for in that precipitate, parti-colored resurrection it was impossible to discriminate action from sound. Old maids scrambled to the seats of their chairs. Professors fell apart into pocket dictionaries, and oranges stolen from the dinner-table. The very deck itself seemed upheaving, and cast forth sailors and officers innumerable. And as to Dr. Cook—words disdain me. I am forced to resort to Science. Spencer alone can do it justice:

"In what respect," he says, "does a body after impact differ from itself before impact? What is this added to it which does not sensibly affect any of its properties, and yet enables it to traverse space? Here was an object at rest [Dr. Cook], and here is the same object moving [Dr. Cook]. In one state it has no tendency to change its place [Dr. Cook], but in the other it is obliged at each instant to assume a new position [Dr. Cook as though the devil was after him]. What is it that will forever go on producing this effect without being exhausted?" The last time we saw him he was dashing through the steerage. He had lost his fur cap.

Why, Sallie, should Mr. Spencer have continued in volumes of reasoning when the answer is so simply and obviously—Squirrels.

And Clementina, the dauntless? Merely sped on to the end of the deck, whirled up an awning rope, and disappeared. And what next? With her part of the generally distributed force, Edith Delancy kicked out of her mass of rugs and threw her pretty chiffon scarf over the head and shoulders of that terrified, half-dressed old maid, who utilized her motion wringing her hands.

"Oh, the green sea!" she wailed. "She 'll think it 's grass and jump in. Somebody catch her—quick!"

"She is there!" called a voice. It was Mr. Spottswood's. He pointed above us to a tiny fantastic shadow on the canvas. "We must form a circle," he said, "and then coax her down."

In a jiffy that incongruous collection spread out, joining hands as if to play ring around the roses. The red-headed man was next to me. The chain was broken on the other side for Clementina to enter her trap. The Old Gray Thing is so tall that he could reach the awning. He walked around tapping gently just behind the shadow. The squirrel

tripped playfully in front of his graceful fingers until at last she stood on the very edge, and two bright eyes peeped down. We waited breathlessly. The fingers tapped again. Then she sprang—a silver dart of sunshine—and landed in our midst on the hard deck. At a sign from Mr. Spottswood, we fell as one man to our knees, narrowing the circle. With her wee front paws held up daintily close to her throbbing little heart, Clementina glanced from face to face in terror.

"Ah, Clemmy dearest—here—here!" faltered her mistress. But at this moment came the triumph of the day. The Parson, whom I had not noticed before, cried out radiantly, "I know," and, putting his hand in his pocket, produced a peanut. "Bunny, bunny," he crooned, crawling nearer. Another silvery flash! Miss Clementina grabbed the peanut, and lighted on his cuff. With a smile shaped like the bottom of a canoe, he picked her up gingerly and bestowed her upon Miss Titcum, who laughed hysterically and thanked him with her eyes.

If he had only let the matter drop there, it would have been a nice little dramatic touch, and we should all have softened toward him; but no indeed. He struggled to his feet and started on an explanation that was neither more nor less than a sermon with a peanut for the text.

Prior to sailing, he had taken a constitutional in a park. It being wrong to forget any of God's little creatures, he had of course provided himself with a bag of provender. And by some remarkable, providential coincidence——

"Pardon me a minute," interrupted Miss Allen, in a manner, although not exactly indulgent, at least to the point, "but I've got to know where that squirrel came from!"

Miss Titcum, I believe, would willingly have heard the Parson all the way to Liverpool; but she hugged up Clemmy a little closer and kindly enlightened us.

Unable to bear the thought of the ocean between herself and her pet, she had decided to bring it with her. She had read, however, a catalogue with the full rules of the ship. One ran thus:

On boarding the steamer, all parrots, dogs, and monkeys must immediately be turned over to the ship's butcher.

"To me," she continued in her high-pitched voice, "that had a sound that was gruesome." She happened to be looking at Mr. Spottswood. I saw a spark that I liked in his eye; but he bowed his head very gravely, and agreed that it did.

Clementina being neither a parrot nor a dog, and certainly not a monkey, Miss Titcum had smuggled her into her cabin. But the cage was so cramped that, only a few moments ago, she had allowed her out to frolic a while on the upper berth. The unsuspecting stewardess opened the door and——

"Oh, for the land's sake!" Miss Titcum shrieked, for the first time aware of her dressing-sack. Then she and Clementina departed literally in a blue streak.

The crowd began a process of disintegration, the Parson repairing to his seat among a group of eager listeners. I was just thinking that I might at last let go my share of pent-up commotion by facing the girls and laughing comfortably, when I suddenly became aware that they were laughing at me. There I stood, Sallie, still holding tightly to the hand of Him of the Red Eyebrows.

"Oh, for the land's sake!" I exclaimed, trying to be funny to cover my embarrassment—and his, for his expression was most strained. "Please excuse me," I went on confusedly; "and—er—would you mind telling me your name?" I had caught another spark in the eye of The Old Gray Thing. "You see, I've never been on a squirrel-hunt with a gentleman to whom I had not been introduced."

Before answering, he glanced quickly at Mr. Spottswood, who suddenly wore the same uncomfortable look that I had noticed a little earlier, when they were talking together over by the rail. "My name," he then remarked with awkward politeness, "is O'Hara. I am pleased to make your acquaintance, Miss."

"Come, Miss Meldrum," interposed Mrs. Delancy lightly, "let's you and Mary and Mr. Spottswood and me have a game of Bridge."

Lifting his astrakhan cap, O'Hara stepped meekly back, and the rest of us started for the little smoking-room, which seems to be quite informally used by everybody.

CHAPTER V.

UNDENIABLE CANDOR

OCTOBER 9.

MY DEAR:

I have found a man who can tell the plain truth. When they began to teach me to play Bridge, I begged Mr. Spottswood to promise his honest opinion of my efforts. After about an hour of angelic patience, he gave up.

"You may do better, Miss Meldrum," he announced, "but you'll never make a good player. You have n't dat sort of mind."

I liked him for knowing that I wanted the truth when I asked it. He plays a crack game himself; but I think he plays too intensely. It makes him nervous. It's either that, or smoking, or thinking.

When the game was over, we were all sitting outside, chatting and singing. Mrs. Delancy has a fine voice. The Old Gray Thing was next to me; but his head was turned, and I could see only his profile. The cross look had come back.

"Mr. Spottswood," I said rather abruptly, "what made that Mr. O'Hara look at you so oddly when I asked him his name? It's puzzled me."

He did n't turn his head; but a tinge of that same uncomfortable expression rose in his cheek. Then, to my further surprise, he smiled.

"Well, you see," he began slowly, as if he were carefully choosing his words, "you see—er—did you notice that he talked with me this morning?"

"I did," I replied. "He almost had you entranced. He must be quite interesting?"

"Very," he answered, still smiling; then paused a moment. "Yes. Well, the fact is—he would have me present him to you. I did not feel—Mr. O'Hara is not—at least—I told him it would hardly do when, in reality, I had not been formally presented myself."

"I think I understand," I said, "and I appreciate it."

"I was glad," he went on, after another queer little pause, "when you spoke to him so kindly. It was not my wish to hurt the man's feelings."

I suppose, Sallie, that O'Hara resented his refusal and was smiling a friendly little "I told you so" when I introduced myself. Is n't it strange how things work around? My deep, dark mystery is turned into something even more harmless than trunk-checks.

The only time Mr. Spottswood looked at me was when he inquired if I had noticed their conversation over by the rail. After that he continued to gaze out to the sea. By and by he grew so silent that I was sure he had forgotten all of us. Presently he sprang up, caught a loose end of my robe, and tucked it around my feet. Then, with an abrupt good-by, he tramped off down the deck. He was bareheaded. I noticed him fling back his shoulders independently and lift his face to the wind. Somehow, I thought of a great St. Bernard swimming through a river, then shaking himself on the bank and starting off afresh. I wonder what he's been through! And yet, Sister Mine, I was always over-romantic—it may have been just my Bridge.

CHAPTER VI.

COLOR ANGELS

OCTOBER 9, 11 P.M.

GOOD-NIGHT, Sallie. I'm sitting up in bed, steadying myself against the roof. A storm is predicted. Already the boat's pitching a little. This is the fourth letter I've written to you to-day, but I just wanted to say that I hope you will sleep well. That's the very nicest thing I can think of.

And one other thing. I'm afraid I lost my temper this afternoon. I want to confess. About the time when people were going down to dress

for dinner, there was a fine sunset. I lingered to watch it. To my surprise, Mr. Spottswood came back and sat down next to me. He was still brooding. I think he has the habit.

"It will be a storm," he announced gloomily.

"But not before night," I answered, determined to be cheerful. The whole deck was tinged with a dewy wild-rose light. "Is n't it wonderful what beauties it takes to make a storm?"

First there was a queer little flash in his eyes, followed by an indulgent expression, as though he were waiting to hear in a Sunday School voice:

Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand.

I was so annoyed that I felt tempted to quote it merely to punish him; but I did n't. Men in the dumps are n't really accountable. You 've got to divert them first—and "account" them afterwards.

By way of diversion, I began to tell him how you and I used to believe in special angels called "Color Angels." Do you remember? How they put into the evening sky the ghosts of all the little dead flowers that hated to be forgotten. When the effect was unusually wonderful, we tried to guess the occasion. Perhaps then it was to receive some particular soul into Heaven. Have you forgotten those pale green ones with flecks of white, soft gray, and ruddy pink? They were for great generals tired and ready to rest. Still, in the tender green of the meadows, under the blossoms of white prepared for them, there must be a faint touch of a peaceful camp-fire with its curling gray smoke.

This proved the wisdom of the Color Angels; because souls who really loved what they did on earth would find it hard at first to believe in a greater happiness.

And I told him of the mauve tints we had for sweet old ladies; and how we never once saw a harmony beautiful enough for mothers. As I was saying that, his eyes flashed again, and he looked away as if he were longing for me to shut up and let him brood in peace.

Sallie, it irritated me. Why should he persist in assuming that I 'm fifteen instead of twenty-five? I sprang up and said:

"Let me tell you something! You think I 'm talking nonsense, and maybe I am. But it's not one whit more childish, or one whit more weak, than for a big, strong man to sit half the time frowning over something that most likely he brought on himself. We make our own lives. Brace up and smile! Other people have got to look at you."

He flushed so deeply that if I had n't been angry I should have been ashamed. But I blundered on:

"Think of something else. Look at that sunset, now! It's there to be enjoyed, not scowled at. Look at it, and tell me what you suppose the Color Angels are getting ready for to-day."

For several moments he gazed at it fixedly. I never saw the sky so intense. Great swirling columns of gray, and deep flashes of blood red pierced with darts of molten gold. Here and there were streaks of vivid blue, like unfurled banners stretched tight in the wind. The flying smoke of the steamer dashed across it in abandon, charging it with life and action.

"Somewhere," he began slowly, "dere has been a battle. It is for dose poor devils knocked out before the end. Each, as he steps in, will feel himself back again—and believe in another chance."

I folded up my rug to go, watching him several moments in silence. Then I asked quietly:

"Are n't you going to finish? You 've left out something."

"What more?" he inquired drearly.

"Why, the main thing of all," I called back hotly, as I started to go. "The whole purpose of Color Angels—it would make those soldiers smile!"

CHAPTER VII.

MY UNTIMELY DEATH

OCTOBER 10.

WELL, SALLIE!

I 'm dead! I died this morning before breakfast. No flowers. My maid was with me until nearly the end. I had always treasured the fond hope of passing away pleasantly; but I failed, my dear, as I 've done in most other things. Still, I would n't stay in that stuffy vault moping over it. I crept up on deck and am trying to be a perfectly amiable corpse.

Mr. Spottswood gave me a kindly glance and shrouded me nicely in two rugs. He insisted that I take his. He has on a colossal sweater. Was n't it good of him, after my crossness of yesterday? It would have served me right if he had smiled at me; but he did n't.

He likes the motion and is going to walk. I hate people who like the motion of boats. It sounds so affected. But I do feel grateful for the rug. He 'd no sooner finished draping me than I was seized with the pangs of death again and had to run down.

He looked surprised to see me back; but laid me out once more. He demanded why I did n't stay in bed. Of course I could n't tell him that my cabin was papered with returned manuscripts, and that a doctor's voice kept singing through the port-hole: "*You must give up writing for good and all.*" He would be sure of my weak-mindedness then. He just thinks so now.

He asked again where I found so many lovely old brooches. Those antiques of grandmother's seem to strike him immensely. He has spoken

of them several times. I have a presentiment, Sallie, that I'm going to put on a different one every day. Vain creatures—women. You see, my own Sal Hepatica, I am including you too; though, if there ever were a high-minded, vanityless person, you are it.

I've just flown below again. I'm lying on the deck now. The Old Gray Thing went off somewhere and got a cushion for me. Really, the man can be positively gentle. He's so big and strong, too. It gives bystanders a sort of moral support simply to look at him. And he has patience. He's made a mummy of me four times.

The last time I fled, I tried to smile my appreciation. I did n't dare open my lips to speak. Of course I came back a fright, with my eyes red and watery; but you don't care much when you're dead.

He's taken his seat now, reading. He's buried in that book; but I pretend that he's keeping guard. It's less lonely. If Peggy were here, it would be a wake. Dear old Peggy, she two-stepped up just now with some beef-tea; but I just could n't, not even for her. Goodness, how it's rocking!

Mr. Spottswood has just banged his book and ordered me to "*stop writing.*" It's silly, but the sound of those words upset me. I dropped the pad and pencil guiltily; then tried to cover my embarrassment by saying that I would if he would let me finish this page, and promise to tell me a story of an English garden. He consented.

He did. It was the story of his own home in London. He lives in a quaint little house, modest and quiet, with a garden at the back. Two old servants who used to be in his family before his mother and sister died still stick to him. They take care of the place while he's roaming around the world. He's an expert mining engineer or something, and has just come from Alaska. He's wild about his work, and wanted to talk more of Alaska; but I could n't pull myself out of that garden. You know, I'd been wanting a description of a real English garden for my story of— Oh, Sallie, there it is; but I'm going to forget—truly. He lives quite alone. I was a little surprised at that. I thought possibly that he was married. He knows so well how to look after people. He remarked rather irritably that that was merely common sense. As to marriage, he was too selfish ever to give up enough to please a wife.

But I'm forgetting to tell you of the garden. He chooses his own flowers—forget-me-nots, anemones, and heaps of pansies. I always feel kindly disposed to persons who like pansies. I was dying to know something about his family; but of course could n't ask. He did say that his father had been a diplomat in Russia. He was brought up in Russia and Denmark, and spoke those languages before he learned

English. That accounts for his occasional accent. It comes in only now and then, as if he were struggling against it.

The description of his home, the den, and little luxuries with which Englishmen love to surround themselves was rather fascinating. He talks well. I believe the man could write. I asked him if he'd ever tried. He said once in a while; but changed the subject abruptly to afternoon tea. That sounds flippant, I know; but it means as much to an Englishman as does a literary career. Sallie, am I boring you to death?

He inquired how long I expected to study French. Any account of my life would have been so humdrum after his that I hated to mention it. But I spoke of you and your wonderful music that is n't music really—but color and light and flowers turned into sound. Before I realized it, I was saying what a terrible shame it was for you to stay at home and grind, just to send me off to make up for—I did have sense enough to stop there. I was sitting up; but I don't remember when I did it. I was so mortified to have plunged into personal things with an utter stranger. Of course I had to make matters worse by veering around recklessly.

"And now," I exclaimed excitedly, "I must tell you all about Sallie's cat!" I went on wildly about the old alley cat you found warming herself on the ash-can; how you adopted her and named her Lady Macbeth, because at the mere sight of a poker she "stood not upon the order of her going."

I think he must have rather a weakness for animals. He asked so many questions about Macbeth. He had never heard of the "Take thy teeth from my ear" variety. His sister once had a Persian cat that he grew quite attached to. It was a relief to have blundered into something that turned out to be less idiotic than I thought. And yet, my dear, maybe he had turned it.

Just then Mrs. Delancy and Miss Allen came along for him to make up a game of Bridge with them and the Captain. He bade me lie down and go to asleep, as if I were at least six.

I have n't said much about the Captain. He's a charming man, and so lively and nice to look upon. It's a pleasure to watch him taking his recreation with that springy soldierly step. Mr. Spottswood said the other day that, if he were a woman, he would marry him.

I believe I must have had a nap. I fancied myself sitting in an English garden finishing that story. A huge creature with a cross expression suddenly came up and jerked away the pad and flung it into a bed of pansies, then tramped away perfectly furious. I jumped so that it waked me.

There stood Him of the Eyebrows staring. He had come, he ex-

plained apologetically, to pick up my rug. The wind had blown it open. He's a queer person. He's invariably appearing when there's no one about. He's most respectful, and never presumes to sit down—that is, near me. Once he asked if I were "comfy." I was so startled that I said yes, when I was as sick as a dog.

I must ask Mr. Spottswood more about him. He seems to like him, and always includes him when he orders cigars for the men playing cards with him. And yet O'Hara is usually alone, and over the other side of the room. Odd, is n't it? Perhaps he's sorry for hurting his feelings the other day.

I must stop writing quick. Here comes The Old Gray Thing now. Pardon the pencil, Sallie, but when I hold the fountain-pen upside down, it won't fount.

CHAPTER VIII.

SNAP-SHOTS

OCTOBER 11.

BEING dead the second day is not half so uncomfortable as the first. It's Sunday morning, and I managed to sit through the service. It was conducted by the Parson with the Collar. Mr. Spottswood vowed moodily that he would not attend; he would remain peacefully on deck and smoke.

The Captain, with those dear twinkling eyes cast upward, folded hands, and the Parson's voice to perfection, intoned that nothing could drag him from the amen corner. But I know, Sallie, that he wanted to do the right and kind thing, and I liked him for it. After all, it's Sunday morning, it's the Parson's work, and I expect he does his best. Why slight him?

Mr. Spottswood withered me with one of his masterful glances. "It will make you ill," he declared, "dat Parson. He will preach of peanuts. You should not go." But I went.

It was in the dining-room. Each person walked in with a little assumed sanctimonious hitch to his step, different from an ordinary coming-to-dinner gait. It was quite unpremeditated, and I'm sure I did it myself. Then every one seemed to think it would be more churchly not to sit down where he had his regular meal. I was at the opposite end from my place. Sallie, we have n't any right to laugh at other people, have we?

I glanced across from me, and, to my amazement, there sat The Old Gray Thing. His face was a study, glaring at the Parson's smile. I wondered why on earth he came when he did n't want to. Maybe the Captain's remark converted him.

Then began the opening prayer. And, Sallie, that man shrieked out,

"*Oh, Lord!*" exactly as if somebody were pulling a porous plaster off his back. Mr. Spottswood looked at me once. No need to describe his expression. Then he fixed his eyes on the furthest port-hole and never moved.

The sermon began with the pleasantry that there might be a few among us who did not care to listen; but we had to now whether we wanted to or not. A low voice whispered in my ear:

"Yea, verily, Sister, thou canst not swim to shore. *Selah!*" It was the Captain. I felt tempted to reach under the table and squeeze his hand.

Four old maids were there. They seem to spring up fresh every day, like mushrooms. And they all fall in love with the Parson. I ran my eye down the line to see which one looked conscious of a kodak hidden in her lap. "Bunny has it!" murmured another voice; and though he still did not move, I knew it to be Mr. Spottswood's. How could he have divined my thoughts!

He of the Eyebrows was there, too. First time I'd seen him sitting. The boat began to pitch, and I thought several times that I'd have to give up. Once it seemed that the big white collar had slipped over to Peggy, who was clustered near the pulpit; and that the red eyebrows had lighted on The Old Gray Thing. I determined to stick it out, though. I hate to show the white feather. I tried to keep my eyes fixed on the table-cloth. Mr. Spottswood's fingers were drumming incessantly on the felt cover. He seemed fidgety. I wondered if he were going to be ill; but it must have been the sermon.

When they said Amen, he jumped up, and I felt him suddenly seize me by the arm and hustle me up the companion-way. It was like holding to a crook in an iron lamp-post. I never saw such muscle. I wondered if he could have thought I was ill. If he did, it was very kind of him. And my! Sallie, it was a relief to get into that air.

Later Mrs. Delancy appeared with her kodak—real instrument, not a minister. Somehow, I've gotten the two confused. She wanted a group. Mr. Spottswood protested. It was a thing he never indulged in. He loathed it. It seemed to me a most undue violence, so, being a woman, I suppose, I tried to make him do it. Finally he agreed. Then I suggested that they take him tucking in my rug so nicely, that I might prove it at home.

He dropped the rug and stared. I think he forgot that the others were waiting. I motioned to them down at the side of my chair, and they snapped him like that. I'll send you a copy.

"Would you mind telling me why you say dat?" he demanded.

You know, Sallie, he's tremendously clever. I could never be intelligent enough to interest him by being clever, too, so I try to keep him guessing a little. No matter how brilliant a man is, you can make

him think you know something—if you're just careful not to tell him what it is. I really had n't the remotest idea why I said it; but I was charmed with the effect. I should n't have thought he had such curiosity.

Then, Sister, he smiled, the broadest I've seen. He did n't look ugly at all.

"Well," he remarked, "it is the funniest thing you have said yet." I've been puzzling over that sentence ever since. I wonder if he had any reason. He may have meant it, just as I did, to pique my curiosity. I've simply racked my brain. I don't think my remark was funny; and I surely have n't said anything funny before. Now, if I had any inquisitiveness about me, it would really seem that he had turned the tables; but I never hinted at not understanding. I wonder what he did mean!

Mrs. Delancy told me the other day that she often noticed him staring when I was n't looking, as if I were a no-trump hand that he did n't know how to play. She says he even looks a little afraid of me. Is n't that absurd? It's getting late now. I don't know what's become of him. He has absolutely ignored me since the picture.

I'm in bed now. I did n't see The Old Gray Thing but once the whole afternoon. I was ill again and lying on the cushion on the deck. The Parson tramped, tramped, tramped, past my little nook under the bridge. Mr. Spottswood came and stooped beside me, whispering savagely:

"Does he annoy you, that man? If so, I stop him." If he did n't detest the Parson so bitterly, I should have been touched by his air of protection; but since that sermon I believe he was simply dying for a chance to hurl the Smile, Collar, and Kodak into the ocean. Of course I said no. Besides, the boat is n't mine. And then, too, I had put the fringe over my eyes so I could n't see him.

At dinner Mr. Spottswood hardly spoke. He merely told me that I had the little blue puffs in my hair again. I wonder if he thinks they drop on by accident. He ought to see Peggy fussing over their exact arrangement. By the way, she makes the best maid I ever had.

He did remember to hand me the peppermints. He's begun lately, just as he gets up from the table, to reach over and shake out some lozenges from a little cornucopia. He buys them from the barber, I think. They do help seasickness. I always save half for Peggy, and hide them under her pillow. That's her salary; but she does n't know it. I hear her underneath me, hunting for them with the pleasure of a child. It keeps her awake a little while, too. Sometimes I suggest that maybe one has slipped down to the foot. Then I have time to get to sleep.

To-night the Captain gave a little supper. I'll tell you all about it to-morrow. Mr. Spottswood was quite gay and kept us laughing over his stupidity about American humor. He admits that he can see plainly what we *call* the point; but, then, it is n't funny—*really*.

He hardly spoke to me. I wonder if I could have offended him in any way. He was perfectly courteous, but there was a stiffness in his manner. It was almost as it was when I first met him. I thought he was a little sarcastic to the Captain, too.

CHAPTER IX.

A SECRET BEGETS A SECRET

OCTOBER 12.

PEGGY prayed so long this morning that I was late to breakfast. She's a Roman Catholic. She always tells her beads kneeling jam up in front of the wash-stand. Of course I thoroughly respect her religion, and would n't disturb her; but I can't help peeping through the curtain. She's so absorbed, and does n't glance all around as some Romanists do in cathedrals. I've racked my brain to guess why she will choose that one spot that keeps me from bathing.

This morning I half shut my eyes, and, do you know, she looked precisely as if she were kneeling before an altar? I had never realized how much a perpendicular wash-stand, stiff carafe, and wax-colored tooth-brushes could look like an altar. I shall feel it a sacrilege, in future, to pull down the basin and wash.

Dear old Peg, she's making believe, like all the rest of us. We all have our little shrines somewhere, Sallie. Maybe we don't kneel down before them quite as openly as Peggy. Perhaps it would be better if we did. You know those roses you sent, you dear, extravagant thing. They are not dead yet. I've been putting them in cold storage at night. I could n't bear the last home touch to fade. But it was selfish of me. I'm going to send for them to-day and keep them on Peggy's altar.

Now for the Captain's supper. I went out in the dark and rain last night, moping. I was too stupid even to watch a game. At least, I told myself it was that. I think it was because they all ignored or forgot me. While I was tussling with the rugs, He of the Eyebrows glided to the rescue. Then he stood talking of his life in America. He'd been engaged in a profession there seven years. He intimated that it was not approved of by his family. That did n't seem very original. I don't think people's families often do approve of them, do you? I glanced around, wishing for the Captain. He looked about, too, obsequiously, and remarked:

"There's no one out, Miss, but you and me and the stars." I did n't even feel chirpy enough to remind him that it was raining.

By and by he subsided into the gloom, though I had a vague subconsciousness that he was n't far off.

Finally the Captain did come with a nice cigar. I had wished for him, and yet, in a way, his light-hearted flattery grated. At last, I told him I was blue, and asked if he'd kindly do me the favor to talk as if I were another officer, or a boy, or anything but a woman to be entertained with adulation. Without comment, he changed immediately, telling me of his life in the army in India, and all sorts of interesting adventures. Then he proposed his little supper, invited the rest of the party, and gave us a delightful impromptu spread in his own cabin. He did n't offer a word of sympathy; just acted. That's a man's way, and I like it. I wanted to tell Mr. Spottswood. He seemed grouchy, too, in spite of making us laugh. Perhaps hearing such a nice thing would have done him good. But I had n't a chance.

The chance came just now. The girls were teasing me about you. They call you my sweetheart, and complain that I waste all my mornings over love-letters. They summoned Mr. Spottswood to express his opinion. He observed austere that he knew nothing about it—only, that writing sometimes was a very good thing.

A most evasive, indefinite, and possibly sarcastic comment. It fired me with an impulse to avenge his snap-shot of yesterday.

"I was just writing," I remarked carelessly, "a very nice secret to my sister—a secret that I want to tell Mr. Spottswood."

Naturally, the others clamored to know it, too. I refused; but ultimately agreed that he might divulge it afterwards if he saw fit. He looked a trifle disconcerted. Then he sat down without a word and plunged into his book.

Shortly before lunch, when the others had gone down, he glanced up.

"You did have something to tell me?"

How I regretted having made such a point of it! I'd forgotten that I'd have to confess to moping. I told him, however, and what the Captain did, and how it cheered the whole evening.

He smiled appreciatively, and said precisely what I might have expected. In fact, I believe now that's why I wanted to tell him. It was his only comment. He mused a moment, gazing out over the canvas. Then he remarked, as if he were speaking to himself:

"No, I do not repeat to those other ladies—what you have told me."

"I knew that you would n't," I said. Sallie, there's something exquisitely refined about the man.

Presently I asked why he came up so late to-day; if he had been ill. His face clouded again.

"No," he replied; "but the color of the sky offended me, both yesterday and this morning. It is so insultingly gray."

I reminded him that half the voyage was over now, and he would soon be among his own people.

"But I have no family," he rejoined, "except a married brother, whom I rarely see. The majority of my relatives disapprove of me because I prefer to work." There it was again. Did n't I tell you, Sallie? Families never do. I had expected him to be original. Then, to my surprise, he continued:

"Years ago I made what has been considered a great mistake. It has perhaps ruined my whole life, though I believed it right. There has been much to face, in consequence. It is for dat reason I have grown old and hard and ugly."

I was so conscience-stricken that I exclaimed impulsively:

"But you don't look old, except the tinge of gray; and when you smile there's something in your face that I think is beautiful. I like your face anyhow!"

What a commonplace! I was as shocked as he—and startled, because until then I had n't known myself that I did like it. He turned towards me with an embarrassed flush:

"Ah, but, you see, you find good in everything—even in the worst—because you are little Lady Make-Believe." Before I could think, that awful lunch-trumpet screamed in our ears, and he sprang up and was gone.

CHAPTER X.

THE WILL O' THE WISP

OCTOBER 13.

I FORGOT to record yesterday that a notice was put on the bulletin-board offering a reward for a diamond ring. It was lost by Mrs. James, a lady at one of the other tables. Nobody was particularly excited over it. Mrs. James is rather careless. We supposed that she'd come across it among her own things.

To-day, however, gossip is rampant. There's talk of the ship's being searched. I'm very sorry. Things of that kind are so unpleasant. Then, too, there's always the possibility of some innocent person becoming involved. Maybe it will blow over with the fog. There's a frightful fog on, and the horn is moaning like a lost spirit. It's been late in the afternoon ever since nine o'clock this morning. Everybody's talking in paragraphs, to cram in his whole remark before the next whistle. It was funny at first; now it's maddening. The girls are in fine spirits, and I've never seen Mr. Spottswood so gay and witty. The color of the sky has lost its effect entirely. Perhaps it's apologized. He seems intensely amused at the ring gossip. Mrs. James, he declares, is just the sort of woman to adore creating a sensation. They are all in such

a good humor that they actually offered to play Bridge with me; but I declined.

I'm tired and cross. I think I'd like to repair to the woods. After dinner I'm going to steal out to the bow of the boat by myself. I've often wondered how it would feel on the ocean alone. If I could ever write again, Sallie, I might want to describe it. You can't do things well unless you've actually felt them. I believe it's forbidden to roam around in a fog; but for that very reason no one else will go. I can be quite alone. Did you ever have a desire to be disobedient?

OCTOBER 14.

I went. And, Sister Mine, I'll never forget it! I could n't write last night. After it was all over, I was too—but that's not the way to begin. I always want you to hear things just as they come. Then we see them alike. Forgive me if I write jerkily, but I'm still a little nervous.

After dinner I slipped off with my hand full of Mr. Spottswood's peppermints. I crept down the ladder-like steps leading to the bow. All the steerage passengers were of course inside. It seemed as though I really had repaired to the woods. I bumped into funnels, masts, and beams as thick as trees. Several times I had to crawl under them. I should n't have gone; but after I'd started something pulled me. The boat was tossing worse than I ever felt it. At least, it seemed so that far front. Above I could see pale, tremulous spots in the mist, as if the fog were a mammoth ghost pervading all the limitless dark and making the lights afraid. Everything I touched was clammy. I located the direction of the bow by the lantern fastened to the flag-pole. That too shimmered like the wraith of a lamp that had died of fright. Then the wind! I had n't noticed it back on the deck; but there it rushed like a fierce, eerie thing beside itself in rage with the sea. It cut me and slapped me in the face. I grasped the rail. With a mighty lurch, the boat sprang up and up and up, as if it were literally leaping out of the waves to hurl itself into the gale. I was terrified, and held on with all my force to keep from being thrown back against the masts. When I was sure that we'd almost turned over backwards, down it came—down and down on its way to the bottom—down among the furious lashing waves. They roared and hissed, and cold, damp fingers kept tapping me from every side. It was the spray. I crouched close to the big iron bow and held on, scared to death. I dared not start back for fear of being swept off. I knew then how wrong I was to come.

But by degrees I got more used to the terrible pitching, and found that it was really not so bad. Then I listened to the mystic night sounds of the deep; drank in that bracing, poignant air that swirls as through a forest of fantastic salt trees hung with clean, sprightly little fish;

fancied how the bold Vikings in eons past must have exulted in plowing through unknown waters.

It was a night for ghouls and demons and all the tortured furies in the realm of Davy Jones. Every second a giant spectre glimmered through that lurid, whitish veil, dodging timorously from side to side. It was the powerful search-light turned into a helpless phantom before the fog. Engines churned, ropes fluttered like Valkyrs in the wind, and again and again the pathetic danger horn moaned out, "Beware . . . beware!"

But I did n't feel afraid any longer. I raised up, faced the wind, and threw my whole spirit into the reckless passion of the night. It was glorious! Every soul must long at times to toss itself to the elements—be a part of the storm—a rollicking grain of dust once more in the vast wide universe.

Suddenly, above the wind, above the swish of the sea, I distinctly heard a new sound—a sound that dried my breath and set me shuddering. It was a weird, cackling laugh!

I held tight to the rail, sure that my fancy had gone too far. But there it was—coming nearer, followed by a human sob. The fog had grown denser. Something brushed past me, a dim, black object that I felt rather than saw. It grasped the rail next to me. It was that thing that was making those ghastly noises. Its teeth were chattering, and yet, in moments, it laughed. I kept still, hoping that it had n't seen me.

Then, uncannily, it slid to the floor and seemed crawling away. I crouched there, breathless. I could follow it by that demoniacal laugh. I knew somehow that it had reached the flag-pole and was climbing up. I breathed then and tried to force myself to believe it a sailor sent to change the light. That faint little luminous spot trembled convulsively, then sank like a will-o'-the-wisp and was gone. Ah, I was right; but no, it flickered again. It was coming towards me. With another sob, the creature reached the bow once more and flung the lantern into the sea. Then it laughed out like a drunken witch and crouched at my side close to the rail. A new horror flashed over me. The head-light was gone! We might be coming into another boat! Could it be a plan—I got no further. The thing had climbed deftly up to the rail, as though to plunge after the lantern into that seething foam. It was instinct, I suppose, that made me catch its foot and swing on with all my might. Then it screamed!

Oh, Sallie, never to my dying day shall I forget that sound; like a weird, monster sea-gull in agony. It wrenched and pulled and kicked. My strength would never hold out. Suddenly I heard another voice.

"Tito. . . Tito!" it called. There was something so firm, so strong and assuring, in the tone. It seemed a voice that I knew. "Tito!" it thrilled again with that compelling note. The creature I

was holding slipped submissively down to its feet and stood motionless. Then a big pair of arms slid around its body, and Mr. Spottswood's voice said again, "It's all right, Tito. You're safe."

I tried to speak, but my voice had gone, and I could n't move. For a second they stood still. I heard the thing's teeth chatter again, and he sobbed. I felt somehow, in the awful darkness, that Mr. Spottswood's hands were running over the man's body. Something dropped on my foot with a thud; but still I could n't move.

"Come, Tito. You're tired, poor old chap—come!" They moved away silently, and left me alone.

I slipped down to the floor, and my hand touched the thing that had hit my foot. It was a big, clumsy knife. You know, Sallie, I sat there with that knife in my hand and trembled like a fool. Was n't it perfectly idiotic? After all that incomprehensible performance, to be scared of a simple knife! What was the matter with the creature? Was he drunk? How did he get there? How on earth had Mr. Spottswood come? Oh, and he might have been killed with that horrid, sharp-bladed thing! Ugh, how it sickened me! I don't know how long I sat there in the wet, thinking about it. Finally it dawned on me that I'd better go in and hear the truth, or see if I had been dreaming.

I tried to get up, but my legs were numb and would n't budge. If I'd only spoken and gone with Mr. Spottswood! I began to think I'd have to stay there all night. Then I remembered the lantern. Of course they could n't possibly see through the fog that 't was gone. They must be told at once. Above the rushing water, I was sure I heard another steamer. That enabled me to crawl. I bumped into something—a beam, I thought. But it moved. Oh, Lord! Then it reached down and caught me in its arms. That same familiar voice cried out, but oh, so differently:

"Why, you, child! Is it you?"

"Yes," I stammered; "it's me! But something's happened to my legs. Run quick and tell them about the light. It's gone!" Before I finished, he had slipped off his big overcoat and balled me up in it. Then, I think, he must have lifted me over some of those tree-trunks. I had my arms around his neck, and my face close to his soft, warm collar. But I did n't realize that I was doing it. All I knew was that I'd never felt so comforted.

"For Heaven's sake, child, did he touch you? Tell me!" His voice sounded queer, and I felt his arms tighten as I kept beseeching him to run about the light.

"Oh, hang the light! They know it!" he yelled above the wind. "Are you hurt?"

"No!" I shrieked back. "Just cold and wobbly. Don't let me go, please!" That strong, protecting clasp tightened again, and he said

something in Russian I could n't understand. But it made my heart throb, and I felt his warm breath against my ear and forgot that I was afraid. I don't know why, but I thought of that poor little red lantern far behind us, sinking among the strange wild fish. I imagined its going down still lighted. It seemed so awful for it to be all by itself. Then I remembered that scream, and held on tighter than ever; and I was so glad, Sallie, that it was n't O'Hara that had found me.

He climbed over rope coils as deftly as a sailor, and then I felt him mounting the steps. He took me straight to the Captain's cabin under the bridge and put me in a big arm-chair. First he looked down into my face, then grabbed my hands and examined them. I saw his lip twitch painfully. In spite of his strength, I believe that catching the creature had unnerved him. I tried to ask; but he interrupted me.

"How did you do it?" he demanded. I looked. There was a little blood on my hand. The Captain and the girls had come in, crowding around us. They seemed so grave that I felt like a criminal.

"I did n't know that I had done it," I said apologetically. I suppose, Sallie, I must have hurt it when I caught the man's foot. But I had to do it. It would have been wicked to let a human being drown.

"Here, take this," ordered Mr. Spottswood. "You're freezing." It was the Captain's flask. I drank some, and it cured my legs.

"Won't somebody tell me what's been happening?" I begged. I felt that they were all annoyed with me for going out there alone. Of course the Captain had a right to be, being responsible for his passengers.

Mrs. Delancy explained about the poor sailor who had lost his mind. For several days he had acted queerly. They kept an eye on him until a few moments before he escaped. Then every one had been intent upon the fog.

It had been thought best to warn the passengers, and of course search parties had been started. When the lantern was unhooked they knew it by a signal on the bridge. That was their clue. Mr. Spottswood offered to get the man if they would allow him to go alone. He once knew a doctor who treated the insane, and had learned some of his methods. I remembered then his compelling voice when he called, "Tito!" As they came back, Mr. O'Hara had disobeyed orders and crept out to meet them. When they brought the poor creature inside, he was under perfect control and did n't need the hand-cuffs.

After they had put him to bed, Mr. O'Hara made a brilliant suggestion. Perhaps it was Tito who had taken Mrs. James's diamond ring. Perhaps the horror of being searched had crazed his already disturbed mind. And, sure enough, there it was in his trousers pocket, stuck inside a piece of tobacco. Rather a cunning way to hide it, was n't it? Every one had forgotten about the ring, even Mrs. James, in all the excitement. Was n't it lucky that O'Hara remembered?

I was ashamed, Sallie, but I shivered incessantly, and my muscles would twitch. My hand was scratched a little, and it must have been bruised. It hurt when Mr. Spottswood tied it up in his handkerchief, but I pretended that it did n't. I hated for him to think me a coward about everything. It was silly, but when he took hold of my fingers (and he did it kindly and gently) I suddenly remembered how I had clung close to his neck, and my cheeks began to burn, and I did n't want to look at him. I tried to thank him for finding me; but he told me I'd better be quiet and go to bed.

When I went down, Peggy and the girls helped me undress, as if I were an invalid. It really made me feel uncomfortable. Mr. Spottswood sent word that the fog was quite cleared by the wind; a new lantern had been hung; and the Captain had his eye on all approaching steamers. There being no further responsibility for me, he trusted that I would soon go to sleep.

The girls chatted gaily about hair-tonics and cold-cream, then kissed me good-night and gave me something for nerves. When they had gone, Peggy undressed very quietly. I think she had been ordered not to speak. I was wondering vaguely what it was that The Old Gray Thing whispered in Russian, and why he suddenly tightened his arms when I so foolishly pleaded not to be let go. I expect he was just sorry for me, Sallie; but the memory of it soothed me and made me forget poor Tito.

Presently I heard a rustling close to me. It was Peggy's curl-papers scraping the side of my berth. I opened the curtain. Her beaming face was rising like a full moon with sprouts.

"It's just one thing, ma'am, that I'm feeling obliged to tell you," and I knew by the light in her Irish eyes that she too wanted to cheer me before I went to sleep.

"Do!" I begged. "I'm dying to hear it."

"We were all that frantic, ma'am, when Mr. Spottswood dashed off saying you were lost! Every mother's son of us wanted to find you. You're not over-strong to look after yourself. The Parson, ma'am, was louder than anybody. He rushed around reckless-like, organizing a brigade, and preachin' out Scripture in the wind. They were to go single file, ma'am, him boldly headin' the line. First he searched the upper deck in every corner, brandishin' his light. Then they came to the bridge. There that inky blackness that the lunatic had been howlin' in hit 'em square in the face. He stopped right short, ma'am, and coughed. Then, with his eyes like saucers, he turns to Mr. O'Hara, and says he:

"'It's a little windy down there, brother. Maybe you'd better get in front. I'm so easy, you know, to take cold!'"

I wish, Sallie, that we could afford to employ Peggy.

CHAPTER XI.

THE OLD GRAY THING TELLS A TALE

OCTOBER 14.

It's a beautifully calm morning after the storm. I slept like a night-watchman. I had a most ridiculously uncomfortable feeling about meeting Mr. Spottswood, after the childish way I had behaved; but he came up so kindly and naturally that it all drifted away like the little lantern in the sea. He seemed quite disturbed because my hand is bruised. Once he looked at me questioningly.

"It's the left one, is n't it?" he said slowly.

I laughed and admitted that even unconsciously I would n't risk the other. "It would interfere with my diary. All that I went for was to write about it to my sister."

His eyes searched me again quizzically. I believe he wanted to ask exactly what happened; and yet he seemed trying to get the whole thing out of my mind. I'm not nervous any longer. Of course it's natural to imagine that somebody's crouching behind my chair; but that will soon pass. I asked him how he knew where I was.

"I did n't know," he replied. "Only, I went forward because you would not have been looking back." How in the name of all the fish in the ocean, Sallie, did he arrive at that?

After a while, something was said of books and writing, and I wormed it out of him that he has written a book himself. He promised to tell me the story of it. I wanted it then and there; but he said no. He would wait for a good opportunity. I could n't see a better one than that moment. The girls were reading, and he and I were at the end of the line. But he shook his head decidedly, and took up his magazine as if he had no further wish to talk to me. I then finished the account of last night for you. Tito seems better to-day, and the doctor thinks it's only temporary. Passengers are constantly passing in groups, talking excitedly and casting significant glances at Mr. Spottswood. Funny that he should have turned out to be the hero, after all! I'm going now to take a nap before lunch.

Late this afternoon Mr. Spottswood came and ensconced himself with his back to Mrs. Delancy, who was dozing, and announced:

"Now I tell you the tale."

I can't possibly write it all. It's a long, gruesome thing—most dramatic. It seems that years ago he lived in Denmark. Outside the city was a winding river bordered with thick, vine-tangled trees and ghostly white flowers. There he used to walk along a lonely path, thinking.

Often he caught a glimpse of a slender woman dressed in black. Her shoulders were bent, and sometimes she paused to gather strength.

Occasionally, he saw her reach over the water's edge, tear down some of the pale flowers, and stick them in her hair. Then she would laugh out pitifully, and try to see her face in the stream. Only once he caught sight of her features, old, wrinkled, and pinched, with great black eyes that stared. Of course he thought her mad; but it haunted him. He went to work to find out who and what she was. His book is the true story of the poor thing's life.

Mrs. Delaney sat up listening. She spoke, but he did n't hear. He had forgotten everything but the tale of a pure, impulsive girl who had grown up like a fawn in her father's woods. She knew all the flowers, and she knew the birds as they knew one another. If she wanted to sing, she sang as they did. If she wanted to swim, she slipped off her soft white garments and plunged into the stream.

His voice was low and tender when he described her—almost as tender as if she'd been somebody near to him. Gradually it grew hard while he told of the man who came and found her, stole her love and her sweet wild trust, and then—went away! After she had drunk deep of a woman's bitterest cup, she began to live again; but something gnawed and scorched in her heart where the love had been.

He was looking out to sea as he said this, and he spoke in short, deliberate sentences.

A relative sent her off to a school. There she studied as one mad for knowledge. Next came a whirl of society. On she went, step by step, toward revenge. At the court of Belgium, she married a rich old officer, to use his money and his name. At last it was given to her to find the man who had left her in the wood. He failed to recognize her. She made no sign, save that she allowed him to look deep into her unfathomable eyes. When he turned away, they haunted him. With all his old conceit, he came back to probe their mysteries. He too was married, and eager with plans for advancement at court. Like a siren, she wiled from him his secrets; and ever so tenderly she smiled as, in his growing passion, he confided to her one by one new and inexplicable meshes gathering in his path. On he went until a day came when he flung away his wife, wealth, ambition—for a glance. He sat in her *salon*, begging in his frenzy that she leave Brussels and fly with him. In a flash of triumph, she revealed herself, and would have laughed aloud—except that the door opened, and there walked into her life again the one man who had been kind. He was a young cousin of her husband, whom she had known in the early days of her marriage. He too had been haunted by her beauty, but had fled to distant lands. Now he had come home, and as he looked at her his eyes were filled with pity. The laughter died from her lips; and in the days that followed, like a pure, fresh-winded storm sweeping through her father's forest, came a big, true woman's love—when it was too late.

All the while, dear, I sat there with two stories racing through my brain—the intense, pathetic one he was telling, and underneath, like a deep bass note in a plaintive harmony, his own. Why wander day after day alone among the gloomy shadows? And I wondered what had been his great mistake.

Then he came to the point where the woman faced this real love of her life, and the cousin stood beside her in one of those moments, as he expressed it, when a man has got to say the thing in his heart—even if it be a sin! He was leaning forward, his lips so tense that the two stories mingled into one. Could he be the man, suffering again that moment's agony!

The woman had learned now her lesson of strength. She gave up and went away to save the man the pain of the sight of her. Then physical suffering came. Doctors treated her with drugs until she lost control, lived on them from hour to hour, wandering up and down among the pale blossoms she had gathered as an innocent girl and thrust into her golden hair.

Neither of us spoke when he finished. Mrs. Delancy said something behind him. He turned, as though startled to find her, and apologized absently. I asked if the story had ever been published. But he has only written it roughly. He showed it to publishers in New York. They refuse to consider it unless he end it more happily. But that would spoil it artistically, and of course he is n't willing.

After Mrs. Delancy had gone to dress for dinner, he sat a while staring into the sunset, just as he did the day my scarf brushed him and he flung it aside. I wondered, Sallie, if he could have told me all this to divert my mind from Tito for the evening. But his expression looked as if he had forgotten me, the ship, and even the ocean. Now and then he seems not to be thinking at all; and yet, at that very moment, he knows more about what I'm thinking than I do myself. Presently he remarked, still gazing at the sunset:

"I have related this story only because I thought it would be of interest: you write." I had particularly avoided telling him that, and I felt my face getting hot.

"I did n't say so," I began lamely.

"No," he interrupted; "yet you have told me many things."

"But I don't write now," I said foolishly; and I'm afraid, Sallie, my voice was unsteady. "I've stopped." He looked around, his face lighted either by the sunset or his smile.

"No, you have not stopped. You write all day long your make-believes. And even at night I think you must sleep with dat little pen in your fingers. No, you will never stop, and some day you will win!"

If I had attempted to tell him how much that meant to me, I should have been a goose and cried or something, so I just jumped up and tried

to get away. The rug was tangled around my feet, and I stumbled. He sprang forward and caught my hand to keep me from falling.

"Why, you've got as cold as ice!" he exclaimed. "I should have noticed it. Take some whiskey when you go down."

When I came to the cabin, I really was cold and shivering. There sat Peggy in a state of ecstatic dread.

"Faith an' it's an awful high sea we're gettin' again, ma'am!" She glories in storms. I usually agree that the weather's frightful and going to be worse, just to cheer her. She stood up to help me dress. I felt embarrassed about getting out a whiskey-flask. It seemed a dissipated thing—to repair to my room and take a drink; but my teeth *were* chattering. I explained that I had sat too long in the cold, put it as nicely as I could, you know; but I felt that she was shocked. Still, not to seem rude, I thought I'd risk offering her some. I cleared my throat.

"Miss Maloney," I ventured, "as we're going to have such a horrible night, do you think it would be better for you to take a wee nip of this, too?"

"Perhaps," she admitted solemnly. I handed her the glass. She poured out more than half the bottle and drank it straight.

"My! but that's bully!" she purred. "Why did n't you say you had it before?"

CHAPTER XII.

THE EFFECT OF A LUNATIC ON SOCIABILITY

OCTOBER 15.

YESTERDAY and to-day there has been a plunge into jovial camaraderie. There are persons talking together who have n't spoken before during the whole voyage. Tito seems to be at the bottom of it, loud and long are the praises of the bold hero who captured him—said hero glaring in consequence, as though he would revel in murdering the lot. I've been conversing with the Parson.

By the way, I coaxed Mr. Spottswood recently to express his opinion of that dignitary. He was eloquent. You should have seen the curl of his lip and heard the imitation of our "*Amurican*" twang.

"Why do I abominate him?" he said. "Why, he's the type that tells you: 'Now, talkin' about par-r-r-rks, you oughter see our old Yellowstone! Ther-r-re's wher-r-e we've got you English skinned a mile!'"

We are crude, Sister, and we do boast. I wonder if we all seem so vulgar. It's a good thing to get on the outside of yourself sometimes, and look at your own body through a thousand miles of other things. I expect when the Hero flies off now and then and I think he's brooding, it's merely because he can't stand us one moment longer.

He passed just now, and you should have caught his expression when he saw the Parson sitting on his steamer-chair. I have n't laid eyes on him since. He's probably swimming over to the *Mauretania*—it's booked to pass us to-day. Of course it's perfectly legitimate to avoid people you don't like; and yet, Sallie, when you come to the heart of it, it can't hurt to be polite. We're all in the same boat; and there's no real harm in that Parson. He means well. He's let six eager spinsters baak in his wisdom for eight days, given them his autograph and copies of his sermons. He confided to me that he was dying to get a snapshot of that elegant-looking Mr. Spottswood. He wants to frame it for his study. I'm saving that.

Peggy's promenading with Him of the Eyebrows. I'm tickled to death. "Yes, ma'am, very pleasant gentleman, ma'am, from Cork." I can hear her now. I wish the Hero could see them. It might stop his wicked banter about O'Hara being enamored of me. He always brings it up hatefully at dinner, just as regularly as he notices my brooches or deals out Peggy's salary. I told him that he paid my maid's wages, and ever since he's been giving me a double supply of peppermints. He remarks that he is suffering from a most peculiar affection: he has Eyebrows on his heels—Eyebrows that talk and ask perpetually about me.

He seems very polite and kind to that O'Hara. I wonder why. O'Hara's no better class than the Parson. Can it be just American plebeianism that grates?

Mrs. Delancy and Miss Allen are charming. They are always bringing me fruit and dainties. Their kindness shames me utterly. I had planned to be so pleasant to every one, and here instead everybody's being pleasant to me. It gives me an overwhelming desire to be philanthropic. I know what I'll do! I'll make believe that I'm a palmist and tell each of those old maids privately that she's going to marry a dark-haired man with a peanut. No, that will be too definite. I'll say black coat and interested in photography. I'll do it as soon as Mrs. James comes for the baby.

I forgot to tell you about little Nannette. I hold her sometimes when her mother goes to sleep or to lunch. They all fancy that I manage her beautifully; but I don't. I'll confess it to you, Sallie: I just bore that baby to sleep. I never could goo-goo. I take hold of her firmly and talk on, in a human voice, until she's positively fagged out from not understanding. It's a theory. Of course I say something sensible, in case she should pick up a word or two. You never can tell about babies. She nods occasionally, as if she knew it all. I tell her what a wondrous thing is a mother's love, and what big, quivering heart-throbs she can cause just by the blink of her violet eyes or the touch of her wee rose-leaf hand.

Mr. Spottswood overheard us one day by accident, and tramped off in disgust. I don't think he likes children. He refuses to come anywhere near Nannette. Here's Mrs. James! I'll get up and walk a little now. I bored my feet to sleep, too. It's a glorious day. I expect Peggy's miserable over it. Don't think I have n't missed you, Sallie, because I have n't said so. But it sounds like looking back.

On the other side I met the Russian-Danish-Englishman. I tried to thank him for what he had said about my writing yesterday, but the words would n't come. He congratulated me most flippantly for walking, which was very foolish. I'm sure I'm not lazy. Then I led him around to where he could see Peggy and the pleasant gentleman from Cork. I thought, of course, he would be ashamed of the lies he's been perpetrating.

"You see there!" I whispered triumphantly.

"Yes," he coolly giped; "not being satisfied with what I could tell him, he would now pump your maid." Was n't it horrid? Of course I laughed pleasantly. I had brought it on myself. But I'm a little tired of being teased about a man like O'Hara. I wonder if he could have guessed my thoughts. He astounded me by suggesting that I run over from Paris to London for a couple of weeks during the season. It would interest me to go with him to some of the big teas and garden parties. It would be a good opportunity to study character and perhaps help me in my work. I was rather dumfounded. I had never thought of seeing him after we left the boat. And I was puzzled too. I hardly know him; and where should I find a chaperon? Still, I could n't question his conception of propriety when he was being kind. I simply spoke of what a great pleasure such a thing would be, and thanked him.

"I would not do dat for many American women," he added. "They would go merely to display their gowns." I could n't help smiling at the idea of entering London society to show my costumes. I told him that I had never been afflicted with either clothes or money.

"You—an American—and you do not care for money!" he burst out, whirling around so that he almost upset me. It seemed to me a most untimed excitement. I admitted that of course I should have liked enough to bring my sister. Then I inquired if he did n't care for it. "No," he said more bitterly than I've ever heard him. "No. I loathe it—loathe the very sight and sound of it!" What on earth do you suppose is the matter with him?

I went down to get a little nap before lunch-time; but I don't think it was necessary. The probabilities are that I'll sleep all night again. Peggy's got a case of Eyebrows, too—only hers are on the brain. I tell

you, Sallie, that poor Tito has played havoc. She was in the cabin arranging her hair a new way; and declaring the weather tempestuous—though there were strong men on board to save us all.

Just as I was dozing, she called up sweetly:

"Miss Meldrum, ma'am, are you asleep?"

"Yes, Peggy," I said. "But I'm listening."

"Oh, ma'am," she exploded, "you remind me so of me faither. He used to talk like that, and it was him that called me Peggy." A long pause. "He just spoke of you, ma'am, beautiful like!" We were nearing Ireland. I wondered if the ghost of Mike Maloney had floated out to meet us.

"Who did?" I demanded. "Your father?"

"Oh, no, ma'am; that pleasant gentleman from Cork. And he asked such a lot of questions."

It seemed to me, Sallie, that I could discern the Englishman's big mouth grinning at me through the port-hole. If he brings up the subject at dinner, I'm—well, I'll just tell a lie, that's all.

As I was finishing my midday potato and returning Nannette to her mother, Mr. Spottswood appeared on the horizon. That's possible, you know, on boats. He kept at a distance until Mrs. James had left. I think he's taken a dislike to her. He has most violent prejudices. She's a big, strong woman, he says, and could hold her child during lunch much better than any one else. But, then, he does n't realize that she has that baby all day long. I made an engagement to sit next to him one night, grab things from his plate, and pour butter-sauce down his collar, just to reorganize his point of view. Besides, Mrs. James has never been ill and can enjoy all the nice things. I eat only one potato. It's quite easy, and it does taste so good out in the air. Take one out to the park some day and try it.

Mr. Spottswood challenged the girls and me to a game of golf this afternoon. My intelligence is comprehensive enough for that. During the game he announced that he would have to go to Paris in a month. If I would give him my address, he would like to look me up. And the girls may be there about the same time. Won't that be nice? He and I won the game.

Later he stated in his same masterful way that when we reached Liverpool he would see me to London (the girls go to Chester), take me to a good hotel, and the next day help me off to Paris. I was so buoyed up at the thought of not crossing England alone that I won another game.

At tea-time he disappeared. The girls and I had a friendly little *Klatsch*. They were discussing him rather freely and surmising as to his history. Mrs. Delancy is particularly amused at his violence in

regard to matrimony. That, she says, is the worst kind. When he does fall in love, he will be what the English call not merely an ass, but a "silly ass, you know!" She declares that the Captain thinks there's more to him than we suspect. But they've simply twisted that. I heard the Captain say it. He meant that the man has far more brain and sense of humor than he displays. He's absolutely to be trusted, I'm sure. Finally, however, it dawned on me why they brought up the subject. They think it might look queer for me to leave the boat escorted by a comparative stranger. I don't feel at all as if he were a stranger, and I'd be as safe, Sallie, as if I were with you. Still, every woman alone must consider appearances. Mrs. Delancy is a good sweet woman. She couldn't exactly reprove me; but she wanted to make me think. If she felt that way, other people might, too.

After dinner I had a chance to speak to The Old Gray Thing. I told him that I'd far rather have him with me than take that tiresome journey alone; but I felt sure that he was the sort of man to realize that a girl mustn't put herself in a position to be explained if she met her friends. As much as I regretted it, and as much as I was grateful, I'd have to find my way across England alone. Sallie, I did n't know until then how much I dreaded it.

He smiled most understandingly and assured me that it was quite all right. He was glad that I had told him at once. Then he talked so frankly and pleasantly that I realized how horribly young of me it was, and how vain, to fancy that he'd care a rap either way. The man's just sorry for me, of course, and he wanted to help.

The truth hurts a little sometimes, does n't it?

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN UNFATHOMABLE GLANCE

OCTOBER 16.

THE sky has assumed its offensive hue again. I'm beginning to feel that way about it, too. I look forward—dull gray. My eye trails along to starboard—dull gray. And I've no doubt that if I looked back it would be the most insultingly dull gray of all; but I'm not looking back.

Everybody's playing Bridge. Mr. Spottswood played furiously last evening, and didn't appear until lunch to-day. The Captain's very busy as the voyage is nearing the end. We land the Queenstown passengers to-morrow night. Peggy and I must part. I expect I'll miss her dreadfully. She gave me her receipt this morning for waking up in time. You offer to the saints a certain prayer for the souls in Purgatory. Any little request made for yourself at the same time will be granted as a reward. She prays it every night, and mentions the hour that she'd like to be waked.

"I've never known it to fail, ma'am," she finished earnestly; then added with a charming flash in her greenish eyes: "But you have to bounce out, ma'am, on the instant—they don't call you a second time!"

I believe I'll take a walk. There's usually something of interest going on if you only look for it. I strolled around the other side last night in the darkness—just thinking, not meaning to eavesdrop at all. Presently from out the blackness I heard an enraptured whisper: "And to think, Horace, that you of all men in the world should have been the one to have that peanut!" So he's been run down at last. The other five are knitting comforters. Good-morning, Sallie. I'm too perfectly cross and hateful to talk to you.

It began to rain and was so blowy and penetrating that I finally landed inside, where they were all playing cards. They were so absorbed that it made me crosser than ever. I went off to a corner to amuse myself. Of course I did wrong, dear; but you don't know how I've been longing—oh, just yearning—to feel the tingling pleasure of seeing a story grow. I got a nice chair close to the light and began on my letter-pad a sketch of the one Mr. Spottswood told us about Denmark. I forgot the doctor's threats concerning nerves, overwrought imagination upsetting digestion and killing sleep, and all that tommy-rot—that may be perfectly sensible. I've been dying to picture the subtle river with its vines and sweeping branches, its shadows and pale white flowers.

I began with the golden-haired girl skipping along the sunlit path in all the freshness of the dawn, her young heart as pure as the delicate morning-glories with dew-drops glistening like tears of joy in their little flower-eyes. Back near a bend in the river I had her father's castle, heavy and square-turreted—a deep, unrelenting shadow whispering of evil and sorrow to come. But she, singing like a bell-bird in the forest, could not see beyond the branches. Then came the scarlet-coated officer stealing through the leaves to find the wonderful music. The red flashed like a crimson poinsettia and charmed the wood-sprite's eyes, as the bold, dashing face ensnared her trusting heart.

I just wrote here and there, selecting strong dramatic points, the main pictures of contrast. I jumped from the idyl by the stream to the crowded ball-room in Brussels years afterwards, when she had become a brilliant, sophisticated woman. Now she stood looking once more into the same bold face, her blood tingling with the memory of that scarlet gleam among the pure pale flowers. The tense second when she saw his lack of recognition; the savage throb of triumph when he leaned forward to begin his fawning effort to win her smiles. What a moment for the stage! Why does n't he make a play of it? I suppose, dear, that I must have forgotten the whole world. I was writing so furiously that I knocked an ink-bottle crashing to the floor. I reached for it mechanic-

ally in the midst of a sentence. When I tried to put it down I found I was holding it out at the side, as if the table were there.

All at once I caught sight of Mr. Spottswood sitting across the room alone. His eyes were fixed on me. Never in my whole life have I met such a glance. He was looking straight at me, but he did n't seem to know that I saw him. It was a gaze so intense, so piercing, that it almost burnt me. I always thought I understood human nature; but I realized then that I knew nothing of men's hearts and souls. It held me so that I forgot the story; forgot the ink-bottle I was holding out as though I were handing it to him. He got up and came toward me.

"What is the matter?" I asked. "Are you ill or hurt? Do you——" Before I could finish, he had taken out his handkerchief and was wiping the ink off my hand. I saw then that I had made an awful mess of it. I tried to explain. It sounded tame and silly, and I kept wondering why he did n't open his lips. Why did n't he, Sallie? He might have said something. He stooped and wiped the carpet too. Then he sat down opposite me at the little table and said—— Just guess!

"You can't learn French in a year." Maybe he'd been thinking of the way I played cards.

"But I'll have to," I insisted.

"Why don't you stay several years? There is much you would like to accomplish. Could you not do that?"

"Of course not," I answered. "It's nothing but gross selfishness that lets me stay a year."

"Books pay well in America," he went on. "If you were to write a successful novel, and make money"—there is always a little note of scorn when he says the word "money"—"den you could. Is it not so?" I tried to answer, but you know that subject always unnerves me. Without knowing it, I had touched the ink-bottle again. Then I pushed back my wisps of hair that he calls "near curls," smearing ink on my forehead. How he sat so kindly before such a hopeless fright I can't conceive; but he did n't even smile. I did manage to say, and made myself laugh a little:

"Well, you see, it just seems that I can't. They've convinced me that I'd better give it up." His face darkened with that awful scowl that it used to have at first.

"He is a terrible fool, dat doctor. Listen! Why do you not take the story I told you? Perhaps you could make a nice ending. You find so much that is bright and good in everything. I think you could do dat." I felt so queer that I could n't speak at first. Then instinctively I stood up.

"Take your book—why—*your very own!*" The thought of it hurt like a physical pain. It flashed over me how I'd hate to give up a thing

I had created. "No, indeed," I stammered. "It would be like taking a man's child. Surely you could n't give up your own little child!" He was still gazing with that same tense expression. "Oh, no, I could never do that! You must write it yourself. It would make such a throbbing, human thing. No one else could ever do it as you!" I glanced down at the table. There was the sheet I had written. I started like a thief, though of course I had meant to tear it up.

"But you must not give up your work," he went on, as if he did n't see. "It would kill you. I watched you just now, and for the first time since you stepped on board you look well and so very happy. Your eyes, dey sparkle, and the color in your cheeks has come like a rose." Was n't it beautiful of him—and I standing there all smudged up with ink!

You know, Sallie, that absurd feeling when you've been ill, that makes you want to cry if people are gentle or kind to you? Some horrible hot tears just would pop out, so I grabbed up the papers and ran away as fast as I could. As I came through the salon, I realized that it was empty. Every soul had gone to dinner long ago. The bugle must have sounded at the very door, and neither of us had heard.

CHAPTER XIV.

PEGGY'S CONFESSION AND SOMETHING ELSE

OCTOBER 17.

I HAD the same uncomfortable sensation about meeting Mr. Spottswood to-day that I had the morning after the storm—only more so. But I need n't have had it, because I have n't seen him, except a fleeting glimpse. He was going out to the bow with a great long cigar and that St. Bernard fling to his shoulders. I think he's been smoking out there all morning. I wonder if he could have thought I did n't appreciate his generosity. I meant to try to tell him to-day how beautiful it was of him. But I can't go out there after him. It would seem like the Parson and the old maids.

Of course, Sallie, I should n't dream of taking his story; but was n't it a big kind thing, his offering it? When I try to thank him, I'm afraid I'll get choky again. Perhaps I'd better speak of it in the land letter. I forgot to tell you about that. He was talking recently of all the steamer letters we've been reading every day. He did n't have one. I impulsively promised to write him a "land letter" to make up for it—a letter to read the night he reaches home. I was glad afterwards that I did. It will be a good chance to express my gratitude. Because, really, Sister, he's been literally taking care of me ever since I came on board. I wonder why he's staying out there alone all day.

We've had lunch and afternoon tea. Still I haven't seen Mr. Spottswood. I feel as if he were avoiding me. Is n't it queer? Maybe he's been packing. We'll land to-morrow night, they think. It almost makes me blue. You do grow attached to people on boats.

Sallie dear, I wish you could see me to-night! I look as if I had made my toilet in a cabbage patch after the cabbages had been sprinkled with Paris green. I owe it to Peggy. She touchingly presented me with a parting gift—two enormous rosettes for my hair. She had fashioned them herself from some poisonous green ribbon. Some demon of fate had whispered to me to put on my red blouse for the first time. Then, at the last moment, came this venomous decoration. I had thought of red for the sake of a little color—color, Sallie—and, ye gods, I have it! I look like a tomato, and would rather have been sliced up on a plate with mayonnaise dressing to cover my shame than to run the gauntlet of that long table. Now I know why I chanced upon a seat next to the Captain. What did our Latin books tell us of the gods heaping joys upon those they meant to destroy? I did it, though, manfully, trying to think of nothing but Peggy's pride.

She turned around in her seat to watch my triumphal entry. She sits over at a far table. Perhaps I seemed to her happy heart like a combination of the emblem of her country and Mr. O'Hara's fascinating scarlet brows. Or maybe dear Mike Maloney used to dine in a red flannel shirt. When I saw her beaming face with its halo of kinks, I waved my hand and grinned vainly. I did n't care a rap then what the rest of them thought. But I still had a weak, foolish dread of looking directly at The Old Gray Thing. All this regalia seemed to make it worse. I believe he's rather liked my taste up to now.

When I took my seat his eyes were fixed on me most oddly. I could n't tell whether he was amused or whether he really admired the combination. He was dressed in an exquisite brown broad-cloth, with a buff vest and soft russet tie. There's always a simple elegance about him; but to-night there was a harmony of tone that made me look like a murderess.

Once or twice he glanced up and smiled so sweetly that I exclaimed involuntarily:

"You don't know how glad I am that I've succeeded in teaching you to smile. It's a wonderful improvement." Then he smiled again most obligingly, and everybody laughed.

During the last course a thing happened that I shall never forget. Every one had gone except our little party. The Captain began a somewhat risqué story. Mr. Spottswood was watching him with that air he has of not looking at all. Presently he interrupted in a perfectly courteous, but most final, voice:

"It is very well to tell to the chaperons, if you would wish, but such

a thing is not for her." For a second there was a tense silence. Even my fingers tingled with an odd little throb of pleasure.

"Listen!" I called out suddenly. "What's that?" as if I heard some unusual sound on the sea. "Listen!" They all turned around to look at the port-holes; and I started them on some other subject when they looked back. It was daring of him to say it to the Captain, and I felt my cheeks burning beneath the cabbages. Still, somehow, I could n't meet his eyes; but I hope he understood that I was grateful. Do you think, Sallie, that I did the right thing?

When he left the table he forgot to hand me any peppermints. I must confess that I was childish enough to be hurt. Besides, I'd planned to give them all to Peggy to-night, to eat on the way over in the little packet-boat to Queenstown. She's a baby about sweet things. I was trying to send for some when Mr. Spottswood came on deck and handed me a neat white box tied with a tinsel cord.

"Another little bonus for Peggy, the artist," he explained. Was n't that nice and thoughtful? And he had understood! But why did he say "another"? Do you suppose he thought that I had given anything to Peggy? Really, Sallie, I'm going to miss that man. I'm rather glad he may have to come to Paris later.

I ran down to help my maid with the last gathering up, and to give her the peppermints. I told her Mr. Spottswood sent them. The good old soul was so touched that I felt a bit choky myself. When the last bundle was strapped she sat down and said she had a confession. It had been weighing on her mind.

She had felt all along that perhaps she should go into the other room. The stewardess told her that I preferred being alone. But she had loved the old lady in Baltimore, she went on, and was so used to waiting on her! After her death it had been perfectly horrible "not havin', as it were, a human soul to button shoes for or rub her back! You know, ma'am, a being can get very dependent on frettin' over somebody." When she found herself in the cabin with such a fine lady, the temptation "just to comfort herself like" by pretending that I needed her was too great. Think of it, Sallie, and I planning to kill her with shoe-trees! There were tears in her eyes as big as the crystal beads on her rosary. I just put my arms around her and hugged her tight. I'd give a whole lot, Sister, to feel that I was as good a woman as Peggy.

She gave me her address and said if there ever came a time when I needed her, to let her know. I felt very blue after she puffed off in the little tug. It made me realize more forcibly the general breaking-up to-morrow. I came up here in the salon to write Mr. Spottswood's land-letter. Mrs. Delancy was here reading a letter from her husband. You know they bring on mail at Queenstown. He must be a very nice husband. She seemed so radiantly happy over it.

When she finished she told me two things. Both of them surprised me, and one of them worried me very much. The first was that Mr. Spottswood is planning to give Mrs. Delancy, Miss Allen, and me a dinner to-morrow night when we land. Think of it—a dinner, Sallie, with the floor steady, the table steady, and everything resting calmly in your plate! I shall accept.

The other was a discovery on her part. The Old Gray Thing is hurt because I refused his escort to London. His one idea was to be of assistance, since I looked so utterly done up by the trip. But that must be his imagination. I'm quite all right. As soon as I get some real food and stop being seasick, I'll feel like a prize-fighter. She must be mistaken. I'll try to find out myself, however, and see what I can do. Now I'll write the land-letter.

I've finished it. I did n't say much except that all his gentle thoughtfulness had perhaps come at a time when I sorely needed it; and for that reason it would be the more dearly remembered. I tried to write as if my voice were there in the little closed home in Avenue Road. You know, Sallie, no matter how much anybody may love solitude, it's bound to hurt some when he plunges back into it after being out in the midst of all the world. It distressed me deeply, I wrote, that I could n't do much in return, except to hope that instead of the usual dull gray his garden would be filled with sunshine and roses in bloom for a welcome.

They are all playing Bridge again. I think they've played twenty-six last games this evening. I watched for a while, but they were too totally immersed to talk even between deals. I hate Bridge.

But why allow myself to be depressed! Voyages are no more than dreams. When we reach Liverpool we shall all wake up and forget. Perhaps some of us have already begun. I wonder!

CHAPTER XV.

THE STRANGEST THING OF ALL

OCTOBER 18.

Soon we're going to land. Every one's been restless all day. It is a stirred-up feeling, really—exactly as I imagine beans would feel shaken up in a hat, having nowhere to go but just that hat, then suddenly being tossed to the winds. There would n't be the remotest chance of their all coming together again.

Mr. Spottswood has on his big gray overcoat and soft floppy fedora. I came upon him in the salon, poring over the first page of a new book from the library. I asked why he began a thing he could n't possibly finish. He made the brilliant reply that he just thought he would read.

He looked utterly grouchy and miserable again. I would give much to know what has happened in his life.

I must have bothered him, because he said, "Could n't you sit there?" pointing to a seat across the table. It was the one with the ink-spot on the cover. I said no—that I did n't want to watch him read. I was going about bidding my friends good-by. Then suddenly I felt that same odd impulse that made me speak to him the first day. I asked abruptly if he came in there to get away from partings and irritating people. In the very same dull tone he said, "Yes." I wondered if he too were thinking of that day and my American forwardness. He sat gazing at the book. Then, trying to imitate his own dictatorial tone, I commanded him to look up a minute. He did so irritably.

"You're worrying yourself to death about something," I began seriously. "I don't want to pry, and there's nothing I can do; but does n't it help any to know—that another fellow's sorry?"

He turned deep red, and, dropping his eyes, he snapped, "No!"

I stood there a moment silently. Then I snapped out just as snappily:

"It does!" and went off to look for Miss Allen.

Well, it's over! We've landed, had a glorious dinner, and I'm in a perfectly wonderful bed—soft, clean, and restful, with not a soul under it. I've peeped down twice, expecting to see the undulations of Peggy.

I'm dead tired, but too excited to sleep. Such a strange thing happened, and I feel so befuddled over it. As the boat was landing, we were all naturally clustered at the rail, watching the fascinating scene of men, women, officers, trucks, baggage, cabmen, porters, agents, gliding in and out with that quiet ease of the English.

Mr. Spottswood had relented enough to come and stand next to me. I was cross myself, but tried to be flippant to cover it. He had very little to say, and stood with his eyes glued to the wharf. I rattled on about the strange way people are brought together on boats and then parted never to meet again. Then I told him of Peggy and her confession. Silence. Presently I added:

"And I've been so glad to know you, particularly because it's a rare thing nowadays to find a person who tells the absolute truth." All at once he began to tremble from head to foot, as though he had a sudden violent chill. Even his hands were quivering as they held the rail. He wheeled around and dashed down the companionway. I was never so shocked in my life. It made me feel icy cold myself, and I stood there wondering if he were off in his cabin still trembling.

Could it have been anything I said? Could he have seen anything or anybody down below that disturbed him? I could n't shake off the creepiness.

By and by he came back and apologized. England was his home, he explained, and he loved it; but there were very sad associations. The first sight of it often brought them back. I stopped him, of course, and begged him to forget that I had been there. Still, Sallie, it was queer for a big, strong man like that. Several times he assured me that it was quite gone now. It never lasted but a moment; but I could see that he was making a big fight to get his grip. I wanted to pat him on the shoulder; though of course I did n't. I just talked on about the trucks, and the officers, and their quiet, easy manner of accomplishing things. Once my scarf blew against him, and he started nervously. I've racked my brain for a solution of it all; but I can't find it. I expect that's why he interests me so much.

I did n't see him again until after we were through with the customs. I had no trouble with my baggage. An English official kept asking if I were quite all right in such a refined voice that it never dawned on me to give him a tip. I should as soon have offered to tip the Captain. I felt rather small later when Mrs. Delancy informed me that it was just what he wanted.

Mr. Spottswood had a carriage ready, and we all came to the North Western Hotel. He was very bright and lively on the way, and kept us laughing. He seemed unusually amused when I told him how He of the Eyebrows had wrung my hand, charging me that if ever I came to Birmingham to let O'Hara know. O'Hara has always seemed to appeal to him strongly. I wonder why. He seemed quite tame and unoriginal to me.

Dinner was a joy unspeakable. I had laid my land-letter on The Old Gray Thing's plate. He glanced at the direction, "To be read the night you reach home," thanked me, and put it into his pocket. He seemed so indifferent that I almost regretted writing it. Once I asked what time he would leave for London in the morning. He turned around with a very broad grin and remarked:

"I do not know; but don't be alarmed. I shall not go in the same train with you."

I felt like a bad child with my jaws boxed, and must confess that it spoiled the rest of the evening. Of course there could n't be any impropriety in his going with me as far as London. I had merely been thinking of the hotel and his staying there until the next day to see me off to Paris, when all the time he had a home of his own. It seemed to me that he ought to have understood and not been hurt, so I said no more.

Once Mrs. Delancy called me Babette.

"Oh, don't call her dat!" he exclaimed. "Her name is Barbara. It is much more beautiful. I was once very fond of some one named Barbara. She was as delicate as a flower . . . and now . . . she has died!"

So that was it, Sallie! The secret of all his gentle sympathy. . . . I had been seasick and was named Barbara! And then, too—don't you remember?—I died!

CHAPTER XIV.

A CAMEO AND A VOICE

OCTOBER 20.

I DIDN'T write at all yesterday. There was n't time. Now I'm dying to start at the end and write backwards; but I shan't. I'll be cold-bloodedly systematic. Maybe when I've written it all out, I can make something of it myself, or perhaps you can. It seems a week since day before yesterday, and I'd give anything to know why— But, there, I am beginning wrong anyhow.

Well, before I went to sleep in the real bed with nobody under it, I made up my mind to say something to Richard Spottswood, Barbara or no Barbara, about the way he spoke to me at dinner. I could n't bear to hurt any one who had been as kind as he.

When we all met at breakfast I plunged in at once, telling him that we'd been misunderstanding each other. I was sorry, and I wanted to ask a favor. He could refuse if he liked, and I should n't blame him. "I'm going to London to-day," I wound up. "Will you let me go in the same compartment with you? Will you see me to my hotel? Afterwards, if I need assistance, I have some friends in the west end. Will you?"

He seemed a trifle embarrassed, but smiled as though I were three, and agreed. I had thought it fairer to mention it before the others, since he had let them see that he was hurt. During the meal he had very little to say.

All morning we walked about, attending to tickets and luggage. Always say luggage, boxes, or bags when you come to England, Sallie. Don't dare allude to your trunk; they'll know that you're an elephant. We can't convince them that we are n't wild animals; but we can keep them guessing as to the species.

Mr. Spottswood wore his knickers. They are gray, and look as English as if he'd cut them out of *Punch*. They are becoming, though, and make him look hardly over thirty. One thing happened that kept the whole morning sunny in spite of the clouds.

In the street we passed a young man with a round, porcine face, tiny eyes, and a perfect little snout of a nose. Involuntarily I glanced up at Mr. Spottswood, and met a flash of such sympathetic understanding.

"Never mind," he whispered in a tone delightfully conciliatory; "he does n't know it!" It made me feel as if we were brothers and had walked around Liverpool together for years.

About two he put the girls into a cab for their train to Chester.

There was something a bit odd in his expression when he fastened the door and turned back to me. I hardly thought of it at the moment. But, you know, things come to you sometimes later on, and seem stranger than they did at first. We were waiting for an afternoon train, as he said he was expecting a telegram from his firm in London. I went up to my room to fasten my "bags" and wash up a little before lunch.

It seemed queer coming down to meet him alone. Perhaps that's the way a bride feels, almost as though she were doing something wrong. He looked as solemn as if he were about to make his first speech in Parliament. He had thoughtfully ordered coffee for me, in case I felt weak and tired after the walk. I did. But of course I'm going to be all right in a few days. The coffee was very strong and went to my head. While I was trying to make things stop wavering, he took from his pocket a little white package.

"I notice," he said, "that you are very fond of antiques. I found this among my things. It was of my family. I wish you to have it." He handed it to me with that same do-as-I-tell-you air.

I think I thanked him, Sallie—I hardly know. I was so astounded and tired and confused from the black coffee. I opened the paper. It was an exquisite unset cameo, soft creamy brown, with the white figure of a woman, and a large, graceful bird drinking from a chalice in her lap. I never saw one so artistically cut. Why on the face of the earth had he given it to me! Perhaps I should n't have taken it. I don't know. I heard myself saying how beautiful it was. Then I quietly put it into my pocket as if I never sat down to lunch anywhere without a knife, a fork, and a cameo. Sister, do you ever feel yourself acting as if you were somebody else—and somebody you'd like to spank?

Then, for some unaccountable reason, Mr. O'Hara popped into my head. I asked what he was, and what possible interest he could have awakened. He had never appealed to me except the night he discovered Mrs. James's ring.

He hesitated a moment and flushed. I wondered if I had hit upon the wrong thing again.

"What's the matter?" I asked. For a second he seemed considering, and then, to my surprise, he burst out laughing. I was not in a mood to be teased; but fortified myself for the worst. He had been indelibly impressed by O'Hara from the very morning that they talked together by the rail, because of a peculiar confidence. It was in regard to his profession. He had not wished it made public, since it might in some slight degree damage his prospects with the ladies—they being fastidious creatures and often foolishly prejudiced. Perhaps now that the voyage was over and O'Hara quite gone, it might be admissible to let me into the secret: the Pleasant Gentleman from Cork was no other

than Kelly, the prize-fighter! He stopped short, his twinkling gray eyes fixed mercilessly on my face. He did n't utter a syllable; but I knew perfectly well that he was following every scene that flashed through my brain—Kelly, the pugilist, tenderly tucking in my rugs, asking if I were "comfy"; Kelly looming up in the darkness to say that there was nobody out but he and I and the stars.

It did rather make my cheeks tingle; but my thoughts flew back and forgave Mr. Spottswood for various little gibes which at the time had annoyed me.

"I suppose," I answered, laughing too, "that he singled out you for his confidence in recognition of your iron muscle. I must say I'd rather fight Mr. Kelly than Mr. Richard Graham Spottswood."

He ceased laughing and changed the subject abruptly. I think he dislikes any allusion to his person as much as he hates being photographed.

In the train I asked for an account of all my expenses, tips, etc. Of course my ticket and room I had paid for. I asked him to put himself in my place and he would see that I was right. He listened very kindly. Then, imitating me exactly, he said:

"Now, Miss Meldrum, will you just for a second put yourself in my place? The tips were precisely what I should have paid alone. If you were a man and invited a lady to lunch with you, would you like her to pay for her lunch?" There was that same dear flash in his eyes that I saw when we passed the man with the face of a pig.

"No, I should n't," I admitted honestly, and settled myself to enjoy the trip. He spread out our "luggage" to fill the seats. I was tired, he explained, and might find it more restful not to have any strangers. He wrapped his rug around my feet just as he did every day on the steamer. How glad I was that I had asked him to come! Then he talked of his work and of Alaska. He glories in his life out-of-doors in strange, wild countries. And he loves his work almost as if it were a person, or a book he was writing. I hoped that he would tell me something of that mysterious flower-like Barbara; but he did n't. I wonder if he was in love with her. And I wonder if he has ever gotten over it.

It was a slow train and took nearly five hours. As night came on, I grew more and more tired. By and by a thought began to haunt me. It was weak and silly; but, try as I would to forget it, it came bobbing back. I'm going to confess it to you, Sallie. He had taken the seat next to me to keep off the draft. Every time I turned my head, even the slightest bit, I could see his big shoulder and—it looked so strong! It must be easier to hold your back up with a shoulder like that. My head ached, and my eyeballs felt as if they needed to be taken out and held under a pump. Some little demon began to whisper:

"Just lean over ever so little and rest your head against that gray shoulder. All the pain will slip away!"

Of course you're shocked, and I'm ashamed; but I could n't help it. Don't think I was silly and sentimental. It was n't that. It was just plain human tired. Maybe it would have been the same way about Peggy's shoulder, or Kelly's—I don't know.

By and by I kept thinking it more fiercely. I was afraid I was going to say it aloud. I tried leaning against those round plush head-rests that stick out stiffly 'way up, too high for ordinary people. They were like big prickly ears, and interfered with my hat. Then I got frightened for fear if I looked at him he would know, just as he always knows what's in other people's minds. So I kept my eyes on the red plush ears across the compartment. It was such a tiny, imbecile thing, and yet I've never battled so in my life. What was the matter with me, Sallie? I tried to dwell on London and the big, tumultuous streets. That made it worse. Then I began to imagine that I'd forgotten the color of his eyes; but of course it was merely because I had decided not to look. There is n't anything in creation, I'm sure, half so idiotic as the shape of those plush ears in trains!

Presently I put up my hand to shut out the sight of them. He leaned forward and his sleeve brushed my wrist. Maybe he thought I was going to faint.

"What is it you are thinking of so intently?" he demanded. There it was—he was going to find out at last.

"Just those ugly plush things," I stammered—and I was, was n't I, Sallie? Then he asked if I were comfortable. I managed to say, "Quite." That was another story. I could feel rows of teeth on every rib aching enough to be pulled.

Next my brain began a fiendish compromising.

"You're right," whispered the Voice, "not to tell him. But why not rest your hand against his sleeve? It's such a little thing. He would n't mind. Yes, do that. It would drive the other thought out of your head. You'd feel so safe and protected. Maybe you could sleep!"

"Could n't you tell me something more about your garden?" I asked. There was a mortifying click in my throat, just as if the words had stumbled over some other words crouching there and refusing to get out of the way.

At that moment a dreadful thing happened. He got up, took the seat opposite between the red ears, and stared back.

"You know," he said kindly, "it is n't good to look too hard at any one thing when you're tired. It might make you dizzy."

I don't know why, but I remembered his telling me of the moment in a man's life when he's got to say the thing that's in his heart—even

if it be a sin! I wondered vaguely if any of them ever felt as I did. Then I thought of what you would do, Sallie, and I just closed my eyes and asked the good Lord to help me keep my mouth shut. In two seconds I heard my own voice laughing and saying:

"I don't look much like an inspiration for a prize-fighter just at present, do I?"

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, jumping up. "I should rather say you did. Come, you'd better get off here." A long row of lights flashed upon us as we glided into St. Pancras Station. "You've travelled far enough to-day. You can take a taxi to Victoria in the morning. All you need now is a good night's rest. Come!"

He gathered up the luggage and opened the door. It swooped down upon me, like the whole station falling in, that the time had come for him to leave me to face things alone. As we stepped onto the vast platform with its bedlam of trains, carts, travellers, it stretched out like a view of all the city. My knees shook as though they did n't intend to help me, and that torturing voice fairly screamed in my ears:

"Oh, if he would lift you through it, as he carried you once through the storm!"

"I thought our old ocean was lar-r-rge," I said, trying desperately to laugh, "but her-r-e's wher-r-e you English have got us skinned a mile!" He had taken my elbow to pilot me through the crowd. He stopped short, and his grasp tightened so that it startled me. His face looked strange, as if he were in terrible doubt about something. He opened his lips to speak, then there came into his eyes that same comforting flash of understanding; but he must have changed his mind about what he was going to say, for he shut his lips tightly and walked on again.

The hotel opens into the station. At the door he paused, took off his hat, and held my hand very gently in his, while he said good-night and ordered me to sleep well. Then he smiled as I had taught him to do, and promised to 'phone in the morning.

I heard his voice behind me, calling out to the baggage-man; but I did n't look back. I thought it best to go straight ahead, just as I had done across the ocean. I forgot, however, that it was a theory, and did it mechanically. Maybe I've acquired the habit and can keep on now without its hurting.

I engaged a room and slept obediently until late in the morning. I am now in the train from Calais to Paris. I sent a note to the address he had given me in Avenue Road, saying that I regretted not seeing him again. Of course I could n't have asked further assistance. I had told him the hour of my train. And I watched the platform until it pulled out; but he did n't come. . . . And the clerk at the hotel said that no one had 'phoned.

CHAPTER XIX.

IRRITATING PEPPERMINTS

OCTOBER 21.

SALLIE DEAR:

I've such heaps to say that I'll only hit the high places. I'm wild to write a description of the chalk cliffs at Dover. There was a coloring on them yesterday that would have set a French artist dancing on his head and painting with his feet. Still, there are other things more important, and the trip is rather tiresome, so I'll skip both.

But I wish you could have been with me when the little train puffed into the *Gare du Nord* about seven last night. All the way from Calais the few French words I knew had been trickling out of my mind. By the time I stepped on the platform, I didn't know a thing. I was almost as tired as I was the other night in London; and that wide, wrangling, jangling station with its foreign voices seemed like the big St. Pancras talking out of its head. Frenchmen remind me of "Macbeth" when you pick up the poker, only the effect is just the reverse. Merely cast them a glance, and they "stand not upon the order of their coming." Three manifestly desired to assist me with my suit-case; but of course I did n't see them. I walked on with the multitude, wondering if Madame Laton would keep her promise to meet me, and how I'd ever know her in the jabbering mass of humanity peering through the grating.

I had written her that I'd wear a brown fur toque trimmed with green. Nearly every lady I saw had on one like it, so at least I was in the style, if not pick-out-able. The crowd grew so dense presently that I could n't see ahead of me; but I knew by the squeezing that we'd come to the gate. Trains behind us steamed and roared, trucks rumbled, drivers yelled, and—well, if the Children of Israel had a worse time crossing the Red Sea, I should n't have blamed a one of them for throwing away the things they stole from the Egyptians, whether Moses liked it or not. I lost hold of my suit-case twice; but it moved on steadily by itself.

Finally my feet hit the ground again, and I was through. Somebody was standing directly in front of me, so I waited a moment, trying to remember clearly what it was that I had planned to do. By and by it came to me that I meant to dive into the throng and repeat loudly, "Madame Laton!" until I found my future landlady. Having forced my mind that far, I was suddenly overpowered with such a dread of raising my voice like a cabman, that I weakly decided to walk around a little first and try to locate her by instinct. As I started, I became aware of the person standing in front of me. He was a dark, sleek little man, something like a brunette duck with a Kaiser Wilhelm mustache,

and his neck was tied up. He was waving his hands and talking rapidly. At length it dawned on me that he was addressing his remarks to me. He even leaned forward and tried to take my baggage. I had sense enough to push by him, but he followed me, still grinning and haranguing. All sorts of things flashed through my mind. I was afraid then to call out a name, for fear he would produce an erroneous Madame and try to entrap me. I could n't understand a syllable of what he said, so I went faster, pretending not to hear, until at last I hid behind a gendarme and a fat lady and lost him. I watched him through the crook of the lady's elbow, and, Sallie, that man looked evil as far off as I could see him.

Then I hurried around, scanning all the ladies and asking for Madame Laton. There was one in a black lace wrap, with a red rose on her hat exactly the color of her cheeks, who started towards me, but suddenly wheeled about and tripped off to a crowd of people gathering excitedly back near the gate. I was rather relieved; I did n't like her looks. But something kept pulling my attention back to that crowd. I went over to the edge and tiptoed. There in the midst of all those waving arms and umbrellas stood the same greasy little man with his neck tied up. He was going through exactly the gymnastics he had displayed to me. In front of him, with scarlet cheeks, stood a pretty little American girl, trying her best not to see him. My blood boiled. Of course a woman alone annoyed by a man should n't speak to him; but when he's bullying somebody else, it's different—or ought to be. The lady with the lace wrap was wriggling forward, but I wedged past her and pushed in close to the girl.

"Let her alone!" I said to the man in plain English, and he stepped back quickly with his mouth open, as if he'd understood. Then I asked the girl if I could help her. Was n't it absurd, considering that I could n't look after myself? But she did n't know that, and her big brown eyes lit up at once. I was so bewildered when I glanced around that it seemed as if we were up to our necks in a puddle of little sharp mustaches and pointed beards. The evil, dark man began again, and fingers plucked at my sleeve. I knew I'd have to do something before we went under.

"Whom are you looking for?" I cried in her ear.

"My sister."

"What's her name?"

"Murry," I heard faintly, "Sallie Murry." Oh, how my heart leaped!

"Don't worry," I gasped. "If there's anybody in Paris named Sallie, I'll find her! . . . *Miss Murry!*" I lifted up my voice like a newsboy calling an extra. All the dizziness and the tiredness were gone. "*Miss Sallie Murry!*" And then, for one blissful moment,

I let go everything, shut my eyes, and cried out from the bottom of my heart, "Sallie!"

And Sallie came—a dear-looking woman, making her way past the people, talking French lots more softly than they did. She even spoke to the duck after she had gotten her arm around her sister and whispered a few words to me.

"What does he want?" I asked, so happy that I actually took a kindly interest in him.

"Why, he's looking for an American girl, too—some one who is to board with a Madame Laton. Madame is waiting back there herself—the lady with the red rose."

"Ees eet Meess Meldr-n-n?" chimed in a voice before I got my breath; and the lady with the painted cheeks was holding forward a letter—my own letter that I wrote the day before!

But don't imagine that it bothered me, dear. I did n't care. My heart was on its tiptoes, and I could have faced all the highwaymen in France. I shook hands with Madame and thanked the Murrys. Miss Sallie gave me her address. Then that dark person, who had grinned all the time forgivingly, went off to see about my trunk. Madame explained in fairly good English that he is a doctor from Sicily, boarding in her *pension*.

After we had all three piled into a carriage, I asked her to apologize for me because I had seemed rude. You see, the man had really been trying to help me from the first. Of course one expects Sicilians to be swarthy, and perhaps he can't help his ferret-like eyes and long, flat nose, so I treated the whole performance as a ludicrous blunder on my part.

Soon we rattled on into the thronged, imposing streets. Half the sidewalks were filled with tables of people laughing and drinking, in spite of the nippy air.

After we crossed the river we came through part of the Latin Quarter. The old, musty houses looked like stage-settings in the dimmer light, and the tiny, sooty windows with flickering candles behind them reminded me of funny little fire-grates with curtains drawn across. Men in voluminous capes and jaunty hats glided around, mysteriously singing snatches of real music. You'd love it. It's like what the French call assisting in looking on at the opera.

Madame talked most kindly and seemed nicer than at first. I am sure that the Williamsses would n't have given me her address if she weren't all right. She explained that *Le Canard*—that's the word for duck; I looked it up after I got to my room—had been recently hurt in an auto accident. That's why he has his neck bandaged. I'm afraid I should have guessed on impulse that somebody had tried to cut his throat. I wish I did n't take such violent prejudices.

Madame seems to have utmost confidence in him. She's a widow.

He must have been bored by our English, for presently he stopped staring at me, hunted in his pocket for something, and slipped it into his mouth. Just then we turned a corner and a breeze came my way. Sallie, he was eating a peppermint! And I felt instinctively that it was a round, white one, just like Peggy's salary. I positively hated him. And all at once I got so tired again.

Finally we reached the apartment. It's very neat, and we had a nice dinner on a red-checked table-cloth, with little book-bags at our plates for the enormous checked napkins. Nobody said much. Two shy little French dolls peeped at me across the table. There's a grandmother too, very wide and chunky, with a most peculiar walk—an awkward, swaying motion, like the first attempt of a hobby-horse deprived of its rockers. But she has silver hair and a fine old face. They call her "*Ma petite grand'mère*."

I asked a good many questions because from to-day I'm to speak only French—which means that I'm not to say a word. Think of it! Oh, la la! That's something I've learned, at any rate. Everybody says it—even the little chunky grandmother as she rocks down the corridor.

My room is pink and white, with a big gold mirror and draperies where you wonder why you would never have thought of putting them yourself.

I looked for letters the first thing. Yours was there, you dear, but not one with an English stamp. I thought perhaps Mr. Spottswood might reply to my note. I really hated to leave without a chance to thank him again; and yet I had asked him merely to see me to my hotel. Perhaps he felt that he must do no more. I could have invited him to call in the morning; but that might have looked like suggesting further help. Bless your heart for all your cheering messages and the pillow-covers for my room. It was like you to make them copies of those at home.

Just as I was getting into bed, there was a tap, the door opened, and in walked a brown-eyed maid with a pitcher of hot water.

"*Je suis Marie*," she said simply.

There is such a fresh, wholesome look about her, as if she came from somewhere outside of Paris. Her color is her own, and there's fun and tenderness in the straightforward eyes that somehow made me think of you. Of course to-day, my dear, everything's quite all right, and I'm going to be perfectly satisfied and happy, and absorb a brilliant education without even trying or bothering. But last night I felt like an ache with two long pains for legs and two shorter ones for arms; and when she came in and looked at me that way—well, if I could have done it, Sister, I should have gotten up and walked barefooted back to the *Gare du Nord* and asked that girl named Sallie please just to put her arms around me once and kiss me.

CHAPTER XX.

A LETTER AT LAST

NOVEMBER 30.

DEAREST SALLIE:

I've been too busy to write anything but cards for weeks; but I've revelled in your letters, and am so glad things are going well. Now something original has happened! Do you remember a dream you had once about using up a whole box of matches trying to light the gas? At the very last match it puffed up brilliantly and cried, "Oh, please excuse me for not lighting before!" I had exactly the same inexplicable emotion to-day. The Old Gray Thing's letter has come.

I say his because, at least, it was meant for him. It's the one I wrote him in London. It has come back. There are four Avenue Roads, and apparently—no Mr. Richard Graham Spottswood!

The girls arrived the same day, to spend some time in Paris. They had a similar experience with some kodak pictures they sent him. They are in a rage. Mrs. Delancy feels that she has never been so grossly deceived in all her life. If she were ever to meet him again, she would find great difficulty in recalling him.

Miss Allen declares that Spottswood was an assumed name. She is certain that he had something to hide. To while away his time, he made geese of the whole lot of us. He tried us first about his sense of humor. It worked. The rest was easy.

Mrs. Delancy wrote a full account of him to her husband and mailed it on landing. He replied with laughter in every line. We have all, he thinks, been most "neatly jollied" by a wonderfully clever crook. As for the night he trembled so mysteriously and rushed off to his cabin—why, a mere baby could have seen through that. He had just spied a detective on the wharf.

I was so dazed at first that I could n't think of anything to say. Then it came to me, of course, how perfectly idiotic we were. I told them so; but—would you believe it, Sister?—they were quite in earnest. They even went back to the very first day and tried to prove it to me. They reminded me of how queer he looked when I called him Bickmore and spoke of selecting a name to fit.

I suggested that that was a very good proof that he did n't care for wrong names; but they scorned that. You know, Sallie, no gentleman would care to have his name questioned, or to have one selected for him because it sounded cross.

Besides, a man may have honorable reasons for assuming a name. Still, as a rule, it does n't ring very true, does it? The conversation was irritating in the extreme. They seemed to have taken no account of the man's exquisite refinement and his great big, manly heart. And if

a man were concealing something he had done, would he allude to a mistake?

That was just the point, they insisted. A clever man would. The best way to hide the truth sometimes is to tell it. He was undeniably clever. They brought up his accent too. In spite of it, he had convinced us that he was English.

The day we sailed, why was he off in the smoking-room in a corner alone? I reminded them that they would never have known it if I had n't been there also. Was there anything dishonorable about my hiding my feelings? Sallie, this far am I being fair? I must be perfectly just. The man was so kind to me. Then, besides, he was so fair himself. He told me the blunt truth about the cards. It was so. I can't play a decent game. They consider that a venturesome little ruse to give color to his flattery.

They inquired why he should have jumped so nervously when my scarf brushed him, and again the same way the night we landed. Did n't it look a little guilty, or afraid? Mrs. Delancy was standing next to us at the time. She heard me say how glad I was to find a man who could tell the absolute truth. She deems it quite a dramatic coincidence that it should have come just as he spied the officers on the dock. And I could n't help remembering most uncomfortably, Sallie, how I tried to smooth it over by dwelling on the remarkable ease and deftness with which English officials managed things.

Next they brought up the day I had dubbed him the King of Siam, and his confusion when I wanted his photograph to take home as a proof. Mrs. Delancy had n't forgotten the way he stared now and then when I was n't looking. How on earth could I have puzzled any one? Yet I do remember wanting to keep him guessing.

Just here Mary Allen burst in with a fresh idea: "I tell you, Miss Meldrum! He took you for a lady detective! That's why he was so immensely attentive." Of course, Sallie, it was funny, and I tried to laugh; but it seemed a little catty too. I was not in a very good humor, however. It is n't flattering to observe some one rolling on the bed in fits of mirth because of having called you a colossal fool, is it? She argued between attacks that that was why he wanted me to go to London with him—to use me, Sallie, as a cloak! A big, strong man like that—and a weak, sick woman! That was why he was so worried, and pretended to be hurt when I refused. He then played on my feelings. When I came down and asked him to go—he had known that I would do it; he planned it! It was part of the game.

There are such men, I suppose—men who use brilliant acting to cover a sin. But you don't like to have it rubber-stamped into you that you've been made a dupe to one yourself.

All the story of his life, they claim—his brother, his home and gar-

den, his plans for showing me London society, his horror of money, his constant solicitations for my comfort—were studied attempts to fix our minds upon some definite thing—keep us from surmising.

When I alluded to the respect, the true delicacy, of his every act, they smiled knowingly. It was merely an added proof of fine art, and—I could see in their eyes—an added proof of my mawkish sentiment. They conceded that he possibly had a conscience. He had indeed fought hard against his moods.

At length they began on O'Hara and his air of mystery, his apparent friendship for Mr. Spottswood, the odd glance between them on the day of Clementina. How adroitly it had been turned into a compliment to me! They had always thought it singular that Mr. Spottswood had insisted upon going alone to catch that poor sailor. Why had O'Hara crept out to meet him? And it was O'Hara who had found Mrs. James's diamond ring hidden in the sailor's pocket. Oh, Sallie, the brutal suggestion of it made my blood boil. Before I realized what I was doing I had bounced out of my seat.

"I may be an ignoramus," I told them, "but if so, I'd rather stay one all my life than be capable of such horrid suspicions!"

They giggled again and said it was high time that I travelled a little and learned something about the world. Oh, Sister, I wonder if it is! If I am truly so gullible, I expect I'd better be finding it out!

I had forgotten until then to tell them that O'Hara was a prize-fighter. That brought on another seizure. Did n't I know, they shrieked out spasmodically, that I should n't make statements like that unaccompanied by bottles of smelling-salts? They regretted more than ever the disappearance of Richard Cœur de Lion. What a tragic pity to lose sight of such a brilliant character! And he claimed not to understand American humor! Why, to appeal to my womanly vanity, tell me his pal was in love with me, then when I pinned him down about it (proving that I had bitten), to turn it all into such a charming comedy! Really, the man should write! He would make millions of his detested money!

I suggested that we all buy policemen's helmets and live in Scotland Yard. Truly, my dear, they grated. But they did argue cleverly, and they got so much enjoyment out of it! It's well that somebody could.

I don't seem to have a very sharp mind, and so far I had n't done The Old Gray Thing's cause any great benefit; but I accepted the man's kindness and I ate his dinner, and I'm going to keep on being just, even if they think I'm in love with him.

It occurred to me to tell them how he offered me his book, though I did n't mention that burning glance, nor his wiping the ink from my fingers, nor the singular intensity of his face when I told him that he could n't give up his own creation—the "little child" of his brain. I dreaded to have them twist that into something ghastly.

They reasoned that his appealing to my love of my work was a master-stroke, just as he had appealed to my whims—Peggy, for instance, and the peppermints.

Mrs. Delancy recalled as quick as a flash how I had asked him to tell me the story of his novel. He, for no apparent reason, refused; then tramped around all afternoon making one up.

"Well, even if he did," I persisted, "he made up one good enough to cheat you out of an afternoon nap. But if either of you had ever written anything yourselves, you'd know that you've got to feel in the mood to tell a story."

"Oh, la la!" they crowed. They've learned that, too—the very first day in Paris.

Mr. Delancy inquired in his letter why a man should travel from Alaska to Liverpool by way of Philadelphia instead of New York. I hope that when I marry, Sallie, I'll have as much confidence in my husband as Edith Delancy has in hers. It must make her blissfully happy.

I could n't help flushing when I remembered having carelessly asked that same question. He had had business that called him to Philadelphia, and found it far cheaper to leave from there.

The girls think that his influence over me is complete. Is it that they can't see the difference between fairness and sentiment, or is it that I can't?

Next I drew the lovely cameo out of my little chamois case. They went into raptures over it. Miss Allen clasped her hands and sighed mournfully:

"Ah, to have been a young girl detective!" Really, dear, it was funny. I wish you could have seen them. I laughed in spite of myself.

When I asked triumphantly why he had given me something that belonged to his family, it literally deprived them of words. Finally, between chuckles, they said for the simple reason that he had n't. They had never affirmed that he had a family, nor did his saying so prove it. The cameo might be part of the spoils. He had always displayed a deep interest in antiques. Perhaps that was his specialty.

As a last resort I recalled to their minds the day when the Captain began his "bashful" story, and Mr. Spottswood had checked him for my sake.

"I may not be a Hypatia," I admitted, "and I may not have travelled enough to know much, but I firmly believe that you can sit all your life on one chair and still know how to recognize true refinement. All the things you say sound plausible, and are possible; but I don't believe that a man who is n't a square, clean-minded gentleman could have gotten as far as that!"

Mrs. Delancy said, "Oh, yes," that was very fine and bookish.

Perhaps it was a pity that she could n't feel so, too. I wonder if she could, Sallie, if he had done the thing for her! There's a difference, I suppose. Yet, if there be a difference, and I'm fair, I should look at it as if he had n't said it for me.

Thinking of fairness reminded me of something that has been popping up in my mind very frequently of late. I did n't want to tell them: yet that very fact made me know that I ought to do it. Being just would mean looking from their side, too. So I tried to describe his puzzling expression the day he closed the door of their cab. I think I spoke of it once to you. It was a look of finality—such as a man might show when he finishes a piece of work that he never expects to look at again.

"Did he wear the same relieved expression when he bade farewell to you?" snapped Miss Allen, rather flushed. "Or do you fancy that he was simply glad to be rid of us?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," I answered. "Probably he did, but I did n't look back." And then, Sallie—was it wicked?—I smiled. That's what one gets for arguing with a woman. She can't be impartial. It had cost me a sharp pang to offer that damaging evidence, and I had forced myself to it in untainted justice. All she could see in it was a thrust. And I—well, I've got to admit it—when it dawned on me how it rankled, I was just mere woman enough to gloat.

"It's rather a pity that you did n't look around," she commented. "We might have had even more food for entertaining reflection. And to think," she went on hastily as though she wanted to change the subject, "of his sentimental hint in regard to another Barbara. The long-lost sweetheart stunt is so hackneyed. I'm amazed that he was n't more original—particularly for a climax. Still, perhaps he had already grown weary of it all."

Mrs. Delancy wound up the trial by demanding why he had been so careful to take our correct addresses and give us a bogus one. Why suggest to meet us all in Paris in a month's time? Why never mention the name of his firm, the company in Alaska, or anything really tangible?

And to these questions, Sallie, I have no answer, except that perhaps when he reached Liverpool he waked up—and forgot.

The girls are confident that all I need is a good, heaping, brimming overdose of time.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CONVINCING PROPERTIES OF TIME

DECEMBER 17.

How it is charming, this beautiful language French. Am I it learning? I think that yes. *Par exemple*—it's illogical to use the word "hope" except for the future. You may say, "I hope that he will come to Paris," but if your best friend slips on a banana-peel, you hasten

to his side ejaculating, "I love to believe, my dearie, that you have not broken your leg."

I am studying with an assiduity and taking lectures at the Sorbonne. Each day I understand a few more words. In fact, knowledge is being thrust upon me—some of it knowledge that I would n't seek. One piece began zooming around my brain yesterday like a mosquito, and kept on until finally in the afternoon it bit.

It's connected with this family and indirectly with another person. I'd like to tell you that part first; but I'm going to write it out just as it zoomed. The children have n't anything to do with it. They are exquisite. I love more and more to watch their flashing violet eyes and hear their soft sweet French. The chunky little grandmother is n't in it, either. I do wish you could see her. She's so dramatic. She never talks; she declaims, making gestures with her soup-spoon. That's temperament, Sallie; all the French have it.

What I refer to deals with Madame, *Le Canard*, Marie, and that other person. Madame seems very kind and helps me a lot in my tussles with the language. She suggested some time ago that I begin exchanging lessons with the doctor. His French, she says, is excellent, and he is most anxious to study English. "Study," though, I do not think is the word. He seems to prefer sitting in his little bureau, as they call his office, and letting me do the work. I did n't feel inclined to it from the first; but I could n't hurt their feelings. Madame has a restless nature and flitted through the office so constantly that it made it all the more difficult. However, more of that later.

Marie's the one who's taken my education most seriously. From her I learn so many practical words. I like her better and better. She's from Brittany. There's a straightforward sort of "Pegginess" about her that appeals to me. When she says a thing, you know it's because that's what she's thinking. With Madame, you feel that it's because she's thinking something else.

Then, too, Marie inspires me more to talk. Don't lose patience, my dear. This is really the beginning of what I want to tell you. The other morning my fire went out. She entered and exclaimed, "He has a bad character, this fire! *Mon Dieu!* I will reform him." Whereupon she removed all the funny little kindlings that had been dipped in resin, and relaid the foundation of the fire's character from its infancy.

This gave me an insight into her histrionic tendencies. Later in the day, when the whole family was out, I slipped back into the kitchen just for practise to learn all the names of the pots and pans. Casseroles, you call them collectively. To keep from boring Marie, I suggested that we stage a drama on the kitchen-shelves. She beamed. With the aid of my dictionary and her electric wit, we soon had an opening scene. The plot and characters were to develop gradually.

"Voilà, Mademoiselle," she laughed, pointing to the shelves. "They are long and rounded at the door-post like the bow of a ship. Our piece, let it begin on board."

"Eh bien!" I agreed, feeling even more interested. "Shall we let those spice canisters be two American lady passengers?"

"Oui, oui," she went on enthusiastically. "And the nice tall stone jug will be from Brittany. He is quiet and kind, and people must like him."

"Yes," I said; "but things have to happen in a play. Suppose somebody suspects him of wrong?" Her face fell.

"What—a stone jug from Brittany? *Mais non, Mademoiselle!*"

"But yes," I insisted relentlessly; "somebody suspects him of wrong. And that red carrot lying next to the stove-lifter is thought to be his accomplice. The stove-lifter is a strange sailor. He's mixed up in it, too. And that little blue sauce-pan—what part shall it play?" Her eyes brightened.

"Ah, that is a sweet Mademoiselle who believes in the big slender jug. The gay flowered tea-pot is a *Madame Française* whom none can understand. And this"—she glanced around at me, her eyes grown more serious, and she was pointing to a small oil-cruet with a flat spout exactly like the nose of *Le Canard*—"this is the ship's doctor." Taking the long spoon from the peas she had been stirring, she reached up and pushed the cruets closer to the blue sauce-pan. "He would make appearance to like the Mademoiselle." Then silently she turned the flowered tea-pot so that it faced their direction. Besides increasing my vocabulary, I felt that I was really at the theatre.

There followed a dark midnight scene, when the Tea-Pot rushed forth on deck in nothing but her little cosy, screaming that some one had tried to rob and murder her. The Oil-Cruet claimed to have been a witness and implicated the Tall Stone Jug. The light parts were played by *les cinq petits enfants de cuivre*, or the Five Little Infants of Brass. They were a row of cute little frying-pans—orphans going over in charge of the captain. The Carrot laid the guilt upon the Stove-Lifter, it being, he declared, of a naturally crooked nature. The Spice Jars deemed this a ruse of the Carrot to turn suspicion from the Stone Jug, who was his pal.

"And how shall we end it?" I asked as she stopped for a moment and forced her attention back to the *petits pois*.

"Oh," she cried out musically, "you would wish more! How you have a soul French! I am well happy that you have come!" She clasped her hands and turned back to the shelves. "*Enfin*, there was none to believe in the good Stone Jug from Brittany save the little Sauce-Pan of blue—she believed because she loved him. That is why a woman believes, Mademoiselle. It would be better for a Blue Sauce-Pan to love

a Stone Jug than an Oil-Cruet. Oil-Cruets are sly. But alas——" The front door bell rang down the corridor. "Oh, la la," she exclaimed with a toss of her head, and hurried to answer it. I stood there curiously uncomfortable.

When she came back she was holding up her finger. "*Un monsieur!*" she said in an excited whisper. "*Étranger—salon!*"

I must say that it rather startled me. Of course "foreigner" to her might mean a real human being to me. I wondered if it could possibly be Mr. Spottswood. I had been thinking of him a good deal of late and had quite made up my mind what to say if he came. I stopped at my room and got the cameo.

When I walked into the *salon*, there stood a big gray figure at the window. It brought back the first day on board so vividly that I had to collect my nerve all over again. Then he turned around—it was a fair-faced stranger. With some sort of readjustment of his feet, he bowed low. What he said sounded like, "Will you give me the first dance?"

All I could think of was the little idiom, "Never in the life!" but it answered the purpose. Luckily at that moment Madame arrived. He was a Swede, she told me afterwards, looking for board.

Somehow, I had lost interest in the casseroles. I put on my coat to go for a walk. Before tucking away the cameo, I took a good look at it. Of course I don't get it out on purpose to surmise over it. That's not the way to erase things from one's memory. But this was different. I had thought he was here. While I was gazing at it, it suddenly dawned on me what the exquisitely chaste figures represented. The purely outlined Greek maiden is Hebe bearing the cup for Jupiter. The bird swooping down so fearlessly to drink is her master's eagle. How ignorant of me not to recognize it at first! Then I held it up to the light. Around the head of Hebe shimmered a soft pink, as if a little wild rose were hidden in the very heart of the thing. I fairly caught my breath at the beauty of it.

Why should one who meant to drop a friend utterly want her to have such a memento? Could he have wished it in some way to speak to me? Did he have to act as he did? Could he regret having won my friendship? I could go on with a hundred such questions, and answers too; but each one confuses or contradicts the other, and brings me no further. Only this I know: whether he meant it to speak to me or not, as a separate thing itself it does whisper to me every time I have occasion to look at it—just one word, and always the same: truth. But whose truth, Sister—and why?

It's mawkishly futile to let one's mind dwell on things like that, so I went out to divert myself with the streets before the hour for *Le Canard's* English lesson. The first street I came to was called "Search

for the Middle of the Day." I walked all the way to the end, vaguely expecting to meet the sun taking a stroll, although it was late in the afternoon and drizzling. It's things like that in Paris that almost save people's lives at times. Who could have the blues if he glanced up and read "The Street of the Cat Who Fishes"? He'd forget his troubles in a jiffy hunting for the cat.

By the time I came back to the apartment, I was feeling quite pleased and sane again. The Doctor was waiting. There were flowers on his desk, and I think he must have upset a bottle of cologne. He read somewhat better than usual, and I felt a little prick in my conscience. Towards the close I thought it was perhaps my duty to compliment him for his improvement.

"If you always do as well as this," I said, trying to smile encouragingly, "you will soon speak English." A queer light flashed into his black, glistening eyes, and he leaned forward and asked with a pronunciation like something boiling over on the stove:

"What is it that it is, Mademoiselle, when it is a hole in the cheek of a person?"

I thought a moment until the vapor had cleared out of my mind, and then informed him that possibly the word he wished was "dimple." He bent closer, saying with a fawning grin: "Ah—oui—oui—Mademoiselle—deemple! You—haf one!" and with a sickening laugh, he tried to grasp my hands. But I was ready to spring away when I saw that first flash in his eyes, so he missed me. Just then the door opened, and Madame appeared. I had gathered up my books and was leaving.

"Good evening, Madame," I said, making myself smile again. "*Monsieur le Docteur* has just told me that he no longer wishes to study English;" and I hurried into the corridor and left them.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE "BOWLING-OVER" NATURE OF FACTS

JANUARY 5.

OH, MA CHÈRIE!

Indeed, there's excuse for me this time! I insist that there is. Things connived against me from the start. I can't always circumvent human beings; but I most assuredly do not intend to be subjugated by inanimate objects. I studied so late last night that I could n't remember this morning what I did with my French grammar. I hunted that villainous book for an hour, then found it stuck inside the pillow-case instead of under it. Think of being annoyed all that time by a pillow and a book. I even have a crick in my neck from sleeping on them.

I was feeling depressed too about the language. I began Molière yesterday, and there are a great many expressions that I don't under-

stand. I saw in the church of St. Séverin the other day a memorial tablet put up by a young student in gratitude to Heaven for having successfully passed an examination in English. I'm going to erect one next to it if I ever learn French!

The grammar made me late for my walk. I usually go to the Luxembourg about ten, to get the air and repeat French poetry. Madame says it's very good practice. But, you know, there are times when each thing you think of doing immediately seems to be the last in the world that you'd care for. Just to neglect the park, I went out and climbed on top of a bus. It ran down Vaugirard into the Boulevard St. Michel, which, by the way, ought to be called the Street of the Rush for Education. There you meet all the Jews, Turks, and Infidels that you and I used to pray for in church on Good Friday. They are racing to different colleges.

The whole top of the bus was filled with them. One by one they began talking to me. Of course they fancied that I was noticing them; and I suppose I was in a way—I was counting them. French numbers are hard to remember. The man next to me whispered that I had Titian hair and eyes of azure—a mere offhand pleasantry by way of opening conversation. I descended at the next stop. I wonder how he would have taken my impression of him. He had hair resembling a badly worn tooth-brush, and a countenance like the reflection of a gravedigger in a spoon.

The day was murky, my coat was damp, and I felt that if I could n't see somewhere a strong, wholesome, friendly-looking face, I'd join the Apaches. Perhaps I was homesick, or maybe I'm just making excuses in advance for what I did. But don't ever tell me not to believe in presentiments; for in the very moment that I slid down from that bus a cold, clammy little one took me by the hand. I tried savagely to wrench away; but it held on tight.

In desperation, I started back towards the Gardens, trying to find something soothing in the windows. Nearly every other store is a sort of junk-shop with brass bells, Bedouin dolls, and petrified prunes. Who can buy them? Would you like a prune, Sallie, for a souvenir? Every fresh object seemed more crazy and perverting. One window was decked with priests' hats—squatty, round things marked "Very latest style." In the next were "Novelties in Communion Stockings."

I left the Boulevard and hurried over to rue St. Jacques. All along it the little square windows blinked at me, and the houses looked as dark and gloomy inside as if that were where the night had crept to spend its day. I could n't shake off that nervous, restless feeling that something was going to happen. My conscience kept whispering, "Go to the park and practise the Marseillaise." I'm sure I'll never learn all the words of it, but I don't care!

At last I turned across toward the Boulevard and the Gardens, passing the church of St. James of the High Step. And what do you suppose is written on the corner of that?—"The Street of the Abbé with the Sword"! Next I nearly ran into a statue of the man who discovered quinine. It was so cold and drizzling, however, that that appeared almost rational.

By the time I had gotten well into the Luxembourg, the little presentiment walked along more calmly, and I even began softly the refrain of the Marseillaise:

*Aux armes, citoyens! Formez vos bataillons.
Marchons, marchons—*

That "March, march," inspired me a little. Of course I knew I'd have to pass some of the Park, or Artist, variety of Frenchmen. They seem to be indigenous to the Gardens. There was one a few yards ahead of me. Listen now and see if you can see him:

A bench, dark figure, crossed legs. Body wrapped in romantic cape, open carelessly at throat, disclosing low collar and large black bow, suitable for boy of twelve. Anæmic, dish face, wavy locks, silky mustache. Black hat resting jauntily on curls. Eyes large and round, head bent—always head bent—so that eyes are lifted, showing rims of white beneath. These eyes and these white rims are fixed on approaching female. Below in the sand should be written "Dreaming of Art." What Art? Art thou coming to sit beside me, little maid?

Do you see him, Sallie? And think of a thing like that, my dear, knowing all the irregular verbs in the French language—and I've learned only seventy-five—and I work!

Somehow to-day he irritated me more than usual, and upset the nerves of that presentiment. A little distance ahead I could see another huddled together in the mist. It made me long all the more for a glimpse of something home-like and familiar. I hurried past the second one, not meaning to turn my head; but suddenly out of the corner of my eye I was conscious of a vague outline that I had seen before. Involuntarily I glanced around, and, Sister, it was Richard Spottswood!

He was facing the direction from which I had come. I am sure he must have seen me; but he sat there as cold and still as the statue of the man who discovered quinine.

My lips shut tight, and my feet hurried on as if they had understood the French "*Marchons, marchons.*" I am glad now that they did. He had told me that he was coming to Paris. I had given him permission to call. I should certainly not go hunting him up in parks. He had on his gray coat; but the air was so hazy that I caught only a glimpse of his face. Still, I am positive that it was he.

Presently I found myself scurrying along the street. In my con-

fusion I had turned back towards the gate I went in. It was the wrong way for home, so I wheeled about again—and there was The Old Gray Thing walking out of the entrance I had just left. I thought he was coming to find me, and tried to walk calmly and pretend that I was surprised. But instead he hurried straight to the curbing and waved for a cab. Without seeming to see me at all, he sprang in, and I distinctly heard him say, "*À la station!*" The cab whirled around and dashed off toward the *Gare Montparnasse*. It meant that he was leaving Paris. I had lost my chance to say what I had planned, and I still had the cameo.

Until that moment I don't believe I quite realized that it was he. Suddenly it seemed that I had just come to Paris, and, like a dizzy torrent, all those strange names and things swept back through my brain to taunt me. I was hot, and my hands tingled, and I could n't think. I started towards the Gardens. Then in a flash, through the scraggy branches, I caught sight of that Artist on the bench. There he was—I might have known it! There he still sat—that wretched, blearing apology of a man—*sgt there*—when Richard had gotten up and gone! I could have thrown the prunes at him, the priests' hats and the Bedouin dolls, or cut off his head with that high-stepping *Abbé's* sword.

"Get up!" I cried out, seizing hold of the cold iron bars. "You simpering, goggled-eyed idiot—get up and go home!" Without even waiting to see if he had heard, I swung around and flew down the rue d'Assas. All the way the cold dripping branches pointed at me in shame; but I did n't care. I had to do it. Prime ministers could n't have stopped me.

I hope now, when I can think more calmly, that he really was as inanimate as he looked, and could n't understand. But it relieved the choking feeling; and I'm not sorry even to-night.

The whole thing, however, has taught me something. I'm so sure of it that I might as well tell you. I don't know whether it's been so all along, and Paris has just brought it out; or whether it's of recent development; but I'm absolutely convinced, my dear, that I have a temperament.

You'll hardly mention it before the neighbors, because you know they would n't understand; but, Sallie, whatever you do, for pity's sake don't tell Cousin John—he'd say that I need calomel.

CHAPTER XXII.

WHAT IS LIFE?

JANUARY 18.

I HAD a letter from the girls to-day. They are in Capri, having what the English would call a perfectly ripping time. In Rome they saw a delightful play. It made them think of Richard Spottswood.

There was a colossal hero, who seized a tiny little villain, running his hands all over him, then dauntlessly extracting a nail-file from his pocket and casting it away in scorn. At sight of the file, the heroine swooned. I had never mentioned the knife to them. Was n't it funny? If I had told how Mr. Spottswood's hands seemed to glide all over that sailor's body, I suppose that they would vowed that he put the ring there instead of O'Hara. They went on to say that of course it was a burlesque; but then Richard had n't seemed utterly devoid of melodrama himself. By the way, they had not heard from him yet—had I?

What will they say when I write that he has come to Paris—and gone! I've tried to find a solution; but I can't. My only definite conclusion is that, since I shall never see him again, surmising is useless. I'm sure that my curiosity has been no keener than theirs; but I've noticed for some time that Mrs. Delancy seems to consider it her duty to cure me of a broken heart. My blood-count doubles at the thought of it.

Weeks ago when I joined the Student Hostel—that club for girls that's established in an old nunnery—I wrote her jokingly that I had entered a convent because of an unrequited affection. In her reply she rejoiced that I had arrived at a point where I could see the true humor of the performance. No doubt Richard had retired to a monastery. She, for one, trusted that he was doing heavy penance because of her wasted kodak pictures. She wound up by reminding me that there are a good many more Richards in the world, not a few perhaps in Paris, who would find it indeed *charmant* to beguile the thoughts of sweet young women. She takes me, I presume, for thirteen.

That reminds me of an incident about her which I forgot to record while she was here. We were in an art-shop. She was refusing most positively to buy a delicate vase that was sure to get smashed in her trunk. Suddenly, with all the deftness of a lady's maid, that resourceful little Frenchman began packing an imaginary trunk. And he did the whole thing, too, from bottom to top, calling the name of every article of clothing as he flew through the motions of tucking it away.

"Here, Madame's handsome *manteau* for *ze opéra*. *Voilà, Madame*, far from *danger*—her little shoes." Beads of perspiration popped out on his brow. "*Eh bien! Voici*—it is saved in Madame's *lingerie exquise* she had bought in Paris. *Voyez!* I shake him—he cannot be harmed! *N'est-ce pas, Madame?*" Out flew his arms in one final gesture triumphantly convincing.

She bought the vase.

On the way home, I asked as calmly as I could if she felt that that extraneous little Frenchman had in any way subverted her judgment.

"Not in the slightest," she flashed brightly. "I merely bought it to reward his ingenuity."

"But do you expect to get the thing home whole?" I demanded.

"Oh, yes," she answered lightly; "if I pack it well in something very soft. I know what you're thinking. But this was n't at all like the cool, studied meanness of Richard." If I should ever hear, Sallie, that that vase is smashed, I shall strongly suspect the weight of my telepathic influence.

I realize now what she meant. She thinks that, simply to amuse himself, he deliberately won my—— My very fingers are too indignant to write such a thing. It makes me angrier than when she called him a thief. I remember Miss Allen's saying that my prudishness would chaperon me in Paris. They would probably explain Mr. Spottswood's absolute respect as evidence of being bored. If the game had been worth the candle—— But really, Sister, the more I see of the city, the more I read and hear, the more convinced I am that just such brutally cold-blooded things do happen. And the worst of it is that they are n't considered cold-blooded—but just Life. Everybody's wild to see Life—to know Life—*actually to Live!* And the price of it seems to be giving up every clean, wholesome belief you ever had.

Still, everywhere I find such exquisite harmony. Even their silks and artificial flowers almost rival the work of the Color Angels in the sunsets. And their wonderful music, and their voices! We have n't produced anything like that. We can only imitate. Can they, with their fierce throbbing temperament, have touched heights and depths of which our Anglo-Saxon souls can't say the a-b-c's? And the way they write, Sallie, with a clearness and force so intense, an art so delicate and consummate, that you can never possibly forget the horrible things they tell. We, they claim, are infants, narrow, ignorant, and filled with mock modesty. Are we?

Mrs. Delancy is sure that Mr. Spottswood was a foreigner and quite as charged with temperament as the rest of his kind. How he despised the Parson! How he revelled in his moods! How he loved to work up to a crucial moment! She has never ceased about his refusing to tell his novel until he had me alone. How he led up to the affecting climax and leaned forward watching my face. Also, how startled he was when she spoke behind him. I wonder why it is that I'm so loath to tell her of the time he stared in the salon, and came and wiped the ink from my hand. Is it because I think I understand things that she can't reach? Has it grown too real to me—or not real enough? But theirs was a most clever argument.

Just suppose a woman found out that she'd been as much mistaken in a man as that! Could she ever trust her own judgment again?

But dear me, Sister, I've resolved to put the whole question out of my mind. You see, now, if I think of it for a month! But so far I still maintain that I've been just.

Marie interrupted me at this point to come and regard the five little infants of brass. Her face was so beaming that I almost called her Peggy. Sallie, you should have regarded that kitchen. It fairly scintillated. She's been working over it for weeks. She's cleaned up the entire stage and polished all the casseroles. Every actor shines as if he had just come from Paquin with a new costume. And *les cinq petits enfants de cuivre!* Oh, la la, la la! It is something of magnificent! The little blue sauce-pan is nestling close beside the tall stone jug from Brittany. The stove-lifter and the oil-cruet have disappeared. She takes up the iron plates with a stick. The people of Brittany have an integrity which in Paris, I dare say, would be considered a wee bit overdrawn. Since reading "*Le Pecheur d'Islande*," I feel even more interest in Marie.

I wondered at first why she exclaimed that I had a soul French. Did she think me capable of hooking my belt to a door-knob and whirling round like a pin-wheel over a trifle? Or was it because I had spied out evil even among the casseroles!

It was neither. It's because the things that some people stupidly call trifles—— But no, Sister, I can't quite explain it yet. I'll work it out clearly first. Marie has set me thinking—thinking hard.

To-night I heard Madame Laton remark to the gallant *Italiano* that *la domestique* was developing an unaccountable love for her work. She could n't imagine what had come over her. She must be seeking to attract the milk-man. Sallie, if I were to plaster a flax-seed poultice on the end of my nose, they'd unearth some method of proving beyond a doubt that I did it to attract a man!

CHAPTER XIX.

A WOMAN'S WAY OF KEEPING SILENCE

FEBRUARY 25.

It's been only four months instead of three years, and yet I believe that I am apprehending the language. We have several Roumanians boarding here now—a large, wide mother, a tall, narrow son, and three olive-skinned daughters. The son is a free-thinker, free-talker, and, as to gestures, something of an acrobat. The daughters, having been instructed in a convent, of course possess the only real views of life that there are. They strike me just as mine seem to strike Mrs. Delancy.

Sallie, don't ever begin to think of things relatively. It will prove to you that everybody's batty, and you are the battiest.

At lunch to-day they began discussing religion. I longed for the Parson with his kodak. *Ma petite grand'mère's* arms were flung up over her head, the soup-spoon rampant. The sisters were waving their hands with fingers stretched like tangents. The tall, narrow brother had

gesticulated half his long body upon the table and was working hard with his head and shoulders. Madame seemed directing an orchestra. All the rest of us were leaning far back to keep from being struck.

I suspected a climax, and bent my efforts upon it. It was evolution. They were trying to decide how much time had elapsed since they had all *been* monkeys!

At that moment something happened. Marie entered, handing me a card. On it was written—"Richard Graham Spootswood." I sat there dumbly staring.

"He attends, Mademoiselle, in the *salon*," she reminded me.

I think I asked them in French to excuse me. A million things were pounding in my head. Presently I found myself back in my own room, hunting for the cameo. Then I saw myself in the glass, fingering my "Titian" hair. Wonder if the French could be right about flax-seed poultices! I had on the little mauve dress you made me to work in. I remembered vaguely that he had said he liked it, and I believe I was glad. It was very difficult to think. I knew that I was going to find out something; but what? It's awful to stand on the brink of having it definitely decided whether you've been an absolute fool! I could n't at all plan what to say. Then it occurred to me that in that case it would be better not to say it—just go in and listen. He must have something to tell, as he had come.

When I reached the *salon*, he was standing where the Swede had stood. My heart sank. It might be some stranger by that name. After all, was that really Richard's name? If it were he—perhaps— He turned around. No—yes—but how he had changed! I had not realized it in that fleeting glimpse in the park. His face looked older and more tired, and there was no trace of his smile. Something stared at me from the gray depths of his eyes almost like the strange, penetrating glance on the boat. For an awful second we stood—sizing each other up, I suppose. Then he began: "I would wish to tell you something," but I stopped him.

"Wait, I want to tell you something first." I said it as firmly and clearly as if I had it all planned. I think he turned a little whiter, but his eyes never left my face.

"I don't know who you are, and I don't know what you've done; but you've made me believe in you, and so far I'm not sorry. It can't ever be to any man's discredit to have respected a woman's trust. Because of that and all your kindness, I'm going to keep this cameo." I stopped, Sallie, struck dumb with a something beautiful that had crept into his face. Presently he tried to speak; but he could n't. Then he came nearer, and, taking my hand in the courtly manner of Englishmen, bent and kissed the tips of my fingers.

"Now may I tell you?" he asked. I realized that we were still standing, so I motioned him to a chair. He sat down with that beautiful something still lingering in his eyes, and began his story—his own story that I had wondered about so much.

CHAPTER XX.

THE HERITAGE OF A MAN

FEBRUARY 20.

I'LL try to record it just as it came.

He feared that during the voyage he had often seemed rude, particularly the night we were landing. If I would pardon a few personal things, he would go back a little and tell me the cause.

His father, John Hope Spottswood, Duke of Stanleigh, was Ambassador to Russia. He went first alone to St. Petersburg. Shortly afterwards his wife left England to join him. She was never willing to remain long away from her husband. Very unexpectedly, she fell ill on the journey. In a little wayside tavern her twin sons were born.

The Ambassador had resolved that, should he have an heir, he was to be brought up from infancy at Stanleigh Castle. He must first of all be an Englishman. This had preyed upon his wife's heart. From the moment that her two sons were laid in her arms by the strange Russian nurse, all her love had gone to one—not to the noble-faced little Marquis of Hope, but to the ugly, squirming infant who, as the nurse whispered, had come to comfort her. This sturdy little second son was Richard. John, born a few minutes earlier, was brought up on the old estate by his aunt, and learned to feel the love and pride of the family traditions. Though never very strong physically, every care was lavished upon him. He grew up to splendid manhood, and his father was justly proud.

The other, Richard, was allowed to stay close to his mother. With a passionate devotion, she taught him the love of life for its own sake, and for what a man could be of himself. When he was sixteen she died, leaving him a letter.

In it was a strange confession. A few months after his brother had been sent to Stanleigh Castle, the Russian nurse, on her way through St. Petersburg, stopped to pay her respects. She had conceived a romantic attachment for Her Grace of Stanleigh in her forlorn hour of suffering. She wished to express her sympathy because the little heir, his mother's comfort, had been set away. Then, with a chill of horror, Lady Stanleigh understood. Richard was the heir. He would be strong to lean upon, strong to fill the place of his father. That was what the nurse had meant in her broken English. And she, in her weak, dazed condition, had read it in her own way. Then began her battle. He handed me that part of her letter.

MY BOY [she wrote]:

Perhaps the great heart-yearning had eaten its way into my soul; but I could see it in only one light. Fate had put John into your place; but you had all the strength, and all the love of your mother's very life. I looked deep into your baby eyes. They blinked back merrily and seemed to say: "That 's heritage enough for a man!" So, through all the years, I sealed my lips—and kept my little son.

Still, the law is on your side. I enclose addresses where you may find further proof. If there be a higher duty than in a woman's weak, biased reasoning, do what is best. I 've always believed in you, Richard, and so far I 'm not sorry.

How singular, Sallie, that I should have said the same thing! Perhaps it was why he looked at me so.

In a post-script she wrote that, whatever might be his decision at the time, she wished him to keep the letter. So he put it carefully away.

At twenty-three his brother married a beautiful English woman fitted in every way to adorn the ancestral home of the Stanleighs. His father, the Duke, had died one year previously. When I started to speak he stopped me. No, there had never been any question of sacrifice. His mother was absolutely right. Who but a cad, for a matter of a few moments, would want to oust a weaker chap from his place? And of course I should have despised him, Sallie, if he had.

He realized, however, why his mother had taught him a passionate love of work for its own sake. He smiled for the first time and said:

"Just as you love dose little make-believes." His face grew white and worn again as he went on. A few years after his brother's marriage, he met the daughter of an immensely wealthy man from New York—and loved her. I'm afraid I had a wavery, sinking feeling, Sallie, but I hope I sat perfectly still. Why should it all mean so much to me?

"And then?" I inquired in a calm voice.

"Then," he continued quietly, "I married her."

He believed her as good and high-minded as she was lovely. She preferred making her home in England, not far from Stanleigh Castle. He had to travel constantly; but was glad and proud that she cared for the English life. They had one little child. Her name was Barbara. I remembered his face when I had asked him if he could give up his own little child.

"I know what you think," he said calmly. "I had it to do."

He was mistaken in his wife. She possessed two thoughts—money and position. In some way, while he was at work in Asia, she discovered his mother's letter, read it, and wrote to him at once. He hurried home then to stay a long time with her and the little Barbara. The child he found ill and neglected. Then began a torture unspeakable. He took the letter. He would destroy it immediately, he told her, if she spoke of it outside. He reminded her that she had never been deceived. She

had married of her own will a plain, hard-working man. Still, there was never a word but of injustice, insinuations to his brother and his sweet refined wife. Sallie, I understand more fully the feeling of many English towards us. And there are sometimes two sides to the tales of unhappy duchesses.

I quite forgot my own numb feeling when he told me how, in spite of every effort, his little baby died. At first he was touched by his wife's passionate remorse, and stood with his arm about her beside the fragile little body. I did n't picture his face as he told me; but I could see, as if I were there, his big, warm palm, firm and vigorous. Almost lost in its centre, like a fading snow-flake, lay that pitifully cold little hand . . . poor, wee fingers that had been too weak even to hold the tint of the rose-leaves, or lift themselves for a kiss.

And he in his awful strength must stand and look down at that! A silence fell between us—tense, as it must then have been. Presently he tried to go on. His words were few, but I could read it all in his face. He felt his wife lift her head. His eyes sought hers in that dumb heart-hunger of a man brought low. Her tears were gone.

"What do you care," she said coldly, "for the interests of your child? Suppose it had been a son!"

Oh, Sister, if you could have heard the bitterness of that tone! Instinctively I thrust out my hand to spare him any more. But it was the first time he had ever spoken of it, he told me. If I did n't mind, it would be a relief to finish. He paused.

Hundreds of his words and gestures were coming back, charged with meaning. Where was she now, and what would become of his life? It seemed as though I would choke, if he did n't go on. And yet I felt that I would shrink as from a blow if he did.

"Naturally," he began again, "I offered my wife her release. With her stocks and bonds she might make a better bargain. She refused, but went home to her father with the intention of having the matter investigated by law. The only title I could give was that of Right Honorable, which is used for second sons. She did not deem it enough. It was then that I spent dat time in Denmark. I had grown to loathe Americans, and, above all, I loathed their money.

"Her father, it seems, tried to restrain her, so that no steps were taken publicly. During that year of torture, my brother and his wife had drifted from me. I grew more and more hard, and more wrapped up in my work. I heard little from my wife. I think her hope was that my brother would die. He had never been strong, and there were no children.

"While I was in Alaska this last time, some one sent me a paper announcing her death in an accident. She preferred running her auto down Broadway—it was more exciting than the Park."

When I heard that, Sallie, I felt as I should have, had I listened to that haunting voice on the way to London. An unbearable ache stole away. But I believed that I was being glad for his sake.

When he reached New York, he had to see her father. The old man received him kindly—even expressed regret as to his girl's attitude, but explained that she had invariably demanded her own way, until it had become a disease. He sailed from Philadelphia, hoping to avoid recognition, or any persons who might have heard of the circumstances.

And now for the unconscious part that I began to play. And from the first moment, too, when I dashed into the smoking-room and asked if he were trying to avoid people. It cut like a knife. Yet he heard my stifled sob, with its ring of true pain. But he hated the sight of Americans, particularly women, so he turned away.

In the evening, when my scarf brushed him, the very touch chilled him with the old loathing. Then at dinner, with true American persistence, I brought up the subject of his name. He shuddered lest some one should notice it and know. That led to his hunting up my address to see if I were from New York—and he found Barbara.

By degrees, he discovered that I was suffering too, guessed about my work and the pain it cost me to give up and come away. I don't need to go over it all, Sallie. You've already thought ahead, I am sure. When I began teaching him to smile, it was the first time in years that any one had cared if he smiled or not. Now and then the old pain and dread came back with a rush, and he hated himself and me and everything. It was in one of those moments that he heard me telling little Nannette about the bigness of a mother's love. He could never trust himself to come near the child. In another, I brought up the Color Angels and reproved him angrily for his weakness. Sometimes he would stay in his cabin alone, calling himself a fool, just in the second of release, to believe in any woman.

Then came the night of the storm. Of my own will, I had clung about his neck, begging not to be let go. For a second he felt that I needed his strength. A new quivering joy leaped in his heart, as though some subtle power in the wind had touched upon his misery, turning it, all at once, into a warm, sweet, *living* thing with its breath against his cheek.

I think I understood, for deep down I felt my own heart tremble its response. I shut my eyes for an instant.

"Then," he went on, "I saw your poor little hand. You had struggled to save Tito. You were hurt. A rebellious rage came over me. He might have killed you—that mad, reckless thing!" I heard him shudder—but even that was sweet. "I knew den how much I cared—and *knew that I must stop!*" I opened my eyes, and must have opened something also in my heart, for the little strange happiness fled suddenly,

like a bird that had been fluttering against the wall. He was still talking. I forced myself to listen.

"That day alone at the bow I fought it out—and conquered." Oh, why had he come to tell me! After that, he was glad that I declined his escort to London. The night in the salon, when he was reading, it had cost him hardly a pang to refuse my sympathy. But then came the moment when we landed. I was standing there close in the darkness, telling him so frankly that he had won my trust. Something stronger than he began crying out in his breast, took hold of him bodily and shook him to the finger-tips.

If he had not fled at once, he would have told me that he loved me—loved me, Sallie, plain old good-for-nothing me!

He realized that he must go entirely away and let me think what I would. All my love, he believed, was centred upon my work and you. Several times he well nigh lost his grip—particularly when I said that the big St. Pancras station had our old Atlantic Ocean skinned a mile. He imagined, Sister, that I was about to drop and trying to be brave. I suppose, after all, that he had n't guessed how desperate I was at leaving him. His man was with the chauffeur who took me to Victoria the next day. He saw, too, that I got safely off. Oh, Sallie, I wonder if he went back and told how I hung out of that window, watching!

He received our letters in London, but returned them unopened. He could n't bear for me to think that he had read them and not answered. My land-letter he had read the night in Liverpool. He could n't wait. Then he gave me the cameo. It was among some things left by his mother especially for him. It would have gone to little Barbara. Because it was my name, too, he wanted me to have it. Perhaps when I wore it I would remember him and make believe that he had been a good friend.

He had grown to blame himself as an utter failure. He should have been more with his child, should have been able in some way to touch his wife's heart. Perhaps he should have tried to see things from her standpoint, or have gone about it differently to soften her to his. Now he was a selfish, brooding wanderer, who had cast away his birthright. How could he dare ask for any woman's love? So he had hurried off to Africa to forget. And yet—his lips twitched nervously—something had driven him back through the long hot plains. A month ago he even came to Paris and saw me; but forced himself away again, believing that I did not know.

I was sitting there, Sallie, trembling, with the tears streaming down my cheeks. Presently he glanced up with such a hopeless light in his eyes! I felt my lips quiver, and then I heard myself stammering foolishly:

"Well, I can't say a word—until you do ask me!"

And, Sister Mine, I did n't think a time would ever come when I would n't tell you everything—but it has. Still, with it came the knowledge that just such a moment will come to you, and I won't want you to tell me.

After a while I confessed about that haunting voice in the train. He smiled. He had heard it, too, but thought it was speaking to him. That was why he changed his seat, or he might have listened, and I should have regretted my trust.

I can't write another line to-night, dear heart. My fingers feel so jumpy and so joyous.

CHAPTER XXI.

WHAT LIFE IS

FEBRUARY 21.

GOOD-MORNING, MY DEAR.

There were one or two things I meant to add last night; but I could n't write, Sallie, even to you. It was a beautiful afternoon, and we went far out into the Bois and talked of many things—men and ships, for instance; but not cabbages. Of course I care, and I've cared all along; but I think I care too much to let him risk any more mistakes. So I'm going to wait two years. He will have time to be sure, then, and so shall I.

He will stay a little while in Paris, and then he must be off to the Ural Mountains on an engineering tour. I shall wait here longer and peg away at the French just to prove that I can learn it in less than three years. Then I'm to start on the book. We're going to write it together. He is to send me the manuscript. I'll polish it and see what can be done with the end. It's the only medicine I need, he insists; and if I break down, why, he has strength enough for both of us. Think of having some one to care for you and your work, too! I'm tingling to begin.

And he's coming over to see you, Sallie, as soon as he leaves the Ural Mountains. He wants you to live in England, and of course you must. Catch me separating myself from my entire family! How does it feel, dear, to be an entire family? I never thought of it before.

We've been planning a letter to Mrs. Delancy and Miss Allen. Won't they be disillusioned—poor young things! Of course I have n't told him what they thought.

With a sly twinkle, he inquired, "Shall we write to Birmingham and let O'Hara know?"

I then demanded the real truth about Kelly. It's the only thing I've doubted. But he *was* a prize-fighter, Sallie! Mr. Spottswood was drawn to him at first by his boyish enthusiasm in speaking of "clean

undercuts" and some sort of "swats" straight from the shoulder. That was what he was listening to that morning by the rail. The night he crept out to help with Tito, he had expected a struggle. It was the call of the blood. He was obliged to go! He gloried in his profession, but had to "chuck it," because the only place it paid was brutal America. Foreign countries in general don't seem to think as much of us as we do ourselves.

"And, besides," Mr. Spottswood added, with the old wicked gleam in his eye, "I rather thought that as to sentiment Kelly was a man of jolly good taste for a pugilist. A fellow-feeling, you know, makes one wondrous—blind!"

I changed the subject instantly to Peggy.

"Ah," he interrupted. "I had meant to speak of her. Will you please send an application to-morrow for a future maid?"

And that reminds me, dear, of a discovery I've been making lately. I've referred to it before. Marie started me thinking of it. I'm going to try now to put it into words. See if I make it clear.

You know how, in an orchestra, each instrument must be sweet and true of its kind to cause a perfect harmony? How then they mingle into one grand voice calling to those who love and understand? And the answer is a strange new heart-throb—a joy great enough for tears.

The same way in a painting—hills and cloud are blended; forests and soft green meadows; color, light, and shade—like a silent orchestra that fills some hungry soul with music, and brings in answer that same wondrous heart-throb.

And in a story, Sallie, there must come a deep human tone, strong and lasting—like a cello, or the hills. One by one the characters must play their parts as the soft flute notes of the brook, or the dancing, trilling high lights on the flowers. Some must suffer for the shadows: some must laugh to make the light. And each must help the other by being just what he is himself. If it be done aright, he who reads will hear that same big voice of Harmony crying out to him to be glad.

And I believe, dear, that that one Voice made up of the best that lies in each separate thing—is God.

Do you remember our old shoemaker? How easily he cut those clumsy hides! How he said it was fun when he had the right knife! And the day he broke his awl, do you remember how his face fell? "Oh, I'm sorry," he exclaimed almost tenderly. "It was a sweet little awl!" Afterwards I loved to go and watch him, but I've just found out why. The best that was in him was struggling for its harmony. His reward was a throb of perfect satisfaction—a little whisper of God. And I, sitting near, felt the thrill of it, too.

You know, Sister, when your eyes shine and you say: "How happy I am to-day! I feel so absolutely well!" Every part of you is in

accord, that's why. You've struck a physical harmony, and you can feel the vibration of that big Voice answering.

Mr. Spottswood believes that the mysterious thing we call Life is a bit of something divine given to each of us, only it's stronger in some than others. The way to find out how much we have is by trying to make some kind of Harmony. It does n't matter what—music, art, or planting vegetables—just so a man loves it and does it with his whole soul.

So life must mean simply making things fit. The better we fit them, the louder that Voice of Harmony is going to call—and the more likely it is to be heard by the people who can't do as well. That's what I'm trying to get at, Sallie. If a man is once made conscious of the joy of perfection, he'll want to feel it again, and he'll go to work like a steam engine, trying to do something just right. And if he succeeds, the whole wide universe will move on that much more smoothly because of it.

And what's the working of the universe but Unity—the Great Masterful Voice of God. He is Love, it is true; but He's something more. He's the answer to our best efforts here every day. He's our Happiness!

MARCH 4.

I stopped here over a week ago. This is the first moment I've had since. Mr. Spottswood has gone. He left to-night after the opera. I asked him to get a quiet little seat somewhere in a *loge* that would n't be conspicuous. I wanted him all to myself.

I wore my plain brown silk, with that *écru* collar of Grandmother's lace, and Barbara's brooch that I slipped out day before yesterday and had set. It's done in mellow old English gold. You should have seen his expression when he noticed it. He was a little disappointed, however. He had meant to have it done for me.

We had the whole *loge*. The opera was "Madame Butterfly." When the soft dreamy Night Music began, I reached out instinctively, and felt his hand searching for mine. No one could see. So we sat with that new love-throb in our hearts, listening to what might have been the voices of all the Color Angels planning a perfect dawn. And 'way down deep and vibrant, quivered a tense responsive thrill—God's own answer to that Double Harmony.

When it was done we came home through the scintillating dazzle of a Paris night, all the whirling carriages, the struggling, restless beings, all the infinitesimal parts of a seemingly hopeless effort. And yet perhaps not a second passes without a touch somewhere of accord, or without its answering joy.

It was very hard having to say good-by; but I don't believe it hurt as much as it did at St. Pancras. This time I was so happy and so

sure. Then, too, I'm feeling so much better and stronger. You see, dear, there it is. I wrote that involuntarily. He says that Mr. the Duck was right about the dimples.

I'm going to tell you this one thing, Sister Mine. In the *salon*, when he was leaving, he put that great strong arm around me and turned my face up towards his.

"Are you certain, dear Lady Make-Believe," he asked, "that you won't mind because I threw away my title and everything?"

"Ah, but you have n't done that," I whispered eagerly. "You have the big, clean heart of a man—that's all the title I want. And you've learned the true love of your man's work—that's everything—my Right Honorable Richard!"

"Den you are really content?" he murmured, bending closer, his tender eyes glowing as I'd never seen them glow.

"Why, of course," I told him. "And, besides, you've given me a title of my own. Even though I were not happy, if you came and put your arms around me like this—I could *make believe* that I was."

As he caught me up closer to his dear throbbing heart, there was a flash of that perfect understanding, just as it was the day in Liverpool when we passed the silly young man with the face of a pig.



THE BOULDERS OF THE SUSQUEHANNA SUB- MERGED BY THE GREAT POWER

DAM, AUGUST, 1910

BY LLOYD MIFFLIN

WHERE are those guardians of the rushing stream,—
The river-sculptured rocks of yesterday?
That herd of Lions, couchant for their prey,
Roaring above the freshets, made it seem
As if the waters lived! . . . Man's disesteem
And Mammon-greed have sunk them deep away
Beneath a wide monotony of gray,—
Lost to the world as some drowned poet's dream!

Oh, Thou, retard *our* fate! Give yet the thrills,
The torrent-shock, the impact, and the swirl
Of rushing life, and glimpse of beckoning hills!
Sink us not yet! lovers of sky and sun,
We graying men, who crave, awhile, the whirl
And rapture of the rapids as they run!

YELLOW WATER

By Will Levington Comfort

Author of "Fate Knocks at the Door," "Routledge Rides Alone," etc.

IN the moonlight I watched the hunched figure of the giant at the oars. There were moments in that age of darkness in which my hatred was so consuming that, with a weapon at hand, I should have killed him. I dreaded the morning light, because it would disclose his profile, as it turned to the right and left oversea. . . . All my relation to reality was identified with the woman's moaning. Between these sounds from her, my mind was rushed along in a torrent of nightmarish ideas.

The moon sank. We climbed one of the foot-hills of eternity after that, before the white rose of dawn opened in the east—showed us again where the east was. The giant rowed. The woman lay at my feet in the bottom of the boat, and at intervals stirred and moaned. And this was the third dawn.

We were survivors from the sailing craft *Passion Flower*, carrying copra from the Solomons to Bengal, and wrecked in the third week of her voyage. There had been two other passengers besides the woman and myself. The giant belonged to the crew. The sight of him had repelled me, even in those happy days of good sailing. He was markedly atavistic—gorilla-like, with his hairy chest, huge, high-held shoulders, and stubby, blackened hands. No sound had come to me from his lips (save the gurgle of his drinking), neither before the sinking of the *Passion Flower*, nor up to this hour in the yawl.

What happened to the vessel is not likely to be known. She was humming forward under full sail in the beautiful torrid night. I had left the woman less than an hour before, and was half asleep when the horrible grinding began, as if the spine of the ship were scraping over a reef—where no reefs were charted. The vessel quivered and settled back. The instant's silence was like that following the fall of a child, when one waits for the scream of pain—then running feet, upraised voices, and (when I opened the door of the cabin) the appalling roar of rushing water below in the darkness of the ship. My only thought after that was of the woman. We met in the galley passage. Queerly

enough, before a word was uttered, I kissed her. There was no need to speak. The voices of the men made us know we were sinking.

. . . The other two boats were launched. The giant was unhang-
ing the third, a yawl, from the davits. I commanded him to make room
for the woman and me, and was startled to see him nod—as if the
Captain had spoken. The *Passion Flower* was foundering. Some great
creature strangling to death—such were the sounds from below. The
blackness of the sea was a sudden revelation—the lazy roll of it, the
immensity, its horrible patience.

It was the last moment. Our small boat was overside. The woman
and I clung to the ship's gunwale, at a sickening angle. Rending
dissolution was beneath, as the giant's arms lifted from the yawl. I
passed the woman to him, and he put off furiously. . . . As the ship
heeled over, I leaped into the sea. Under water, I felt the shudder
and the suction from the wreck.

It was a battle to the end. My life depended upon struggling out
of the whirlpool, rather than in making any effort to reach the surface
at once. I was all but done, when the roar and entangling pressure
of the vortex eased, and the lashing water grew still. My lungs seemed
filled with blood. I must have been twenty feet under when I gave a
last kick for the top. All throughout that battle beneath the water,
the image of the giant at the last instant stood before my mind—as
he pulled furiously away! It seems now that I must have sunk again
from the surface—save for the woman's scream. . . . Her hands helped
to lift me.

The light was in my eyes as I regained consciousness in the yawl.
I never saw the other two boats. . . . So, in the beginning of the real
fight with thirst and burning days and famine, I was half-dead. I
think that certain of the veins in my chest were broken—as they break
in the eye and the forehead under the strain of vomiting. My torture
of thirst began with the first consciousness. The woman nursed and
petted me, but my faculties were in some abhorrent spell, in which
only the giant moved.

This is the thought that became the master-key to all the horrible
mania that possessed me for the next forty-eight hours: That he was
the devil incarnate; that he would outlive me, and the woman I loved
would be *alone with him*. . . .

I had known her but the three weeks of the voyage—days and
evenings in the long lulling swell of the Southern Pacific. It was a
rough life that I had put behind, and few were the memories that
pleased me. Meeting the woman had seemed to seal these memories,
and to give me authority for fresh and finer beginnings. Within a
week, I had told her all the best and the worst. What a gamester a
woman is! Her life had known only the quiet places; yet she caught

up the flying, flaming pages of my past, and bound them in the reality of her spirit.

"You ought to know only the easy ways from now on," she said, "and I'll help you to find them." . . . Perhaps it sounds very old and commonplace, but I assure you nothing that ever happened before could touch the hem of its garment for importance. . . . But this is quite enough about Penelope, save that a peace and beauty had come from her to my life, such as I had not known was in the world.

. . . The woman moaned again that third dawn. There was yellow now in the eastern red—the silken yellow of a mandarin's robe—and I felt the first touch of the murdering heat. I knew that this was my last day—even if I must leave the woman with him. . . . There had been six quarts of water, a few crackers, and a can of kippered herring—a hellish thirst-maker. There was less than three pints of water left. The giant had taken his full portion; the woman and I had each fought to make the other drink.

The dawn brought out the great hunched shoulders at the oars—the blistered, ox-like neck. . . . To me, the suspense of waiting for full light in the hope of land or ship, was less that third morning than on the other two. More and more of the sea cleared—filled greedily with the burning light.

The woman arose. I stared into her face as the sleep left her eyes. I should know from them—if the clearing horizon held other than emptiness. She gazed long—winced and smiled at me. I shuddered at my poor ideals of courage before I had met her. Better than an army at a man's hand, is the courage of a woman who loves him. There was not a speck on the round rim of the world. Her eyes fell to the swinging sea.

"It's yellow—yes, it's yellow!" she exclaimed.

. . . The *Passion Flower* had been three days' sail from Madras, I remembered. The mouths of the Kistna and the Godivari discolor the water for many miles at sea. But the west brought out no coast. . . . The giant was pulling steadily. It seemed as easy for him as breathing. He sucked a brass locket that had hung about his neck. I thought of him as the devil—and deathless.

The pressure of the mounting sun was like scalding salt to me. . . . Everything was salt—the gunwales rough with it, my throat caked, pores cracked, and face blistered with salt. . . . The fin of a shark ran across the surface nearby like the point of a paper-knife through the edge of a book. . . . The day was smiting my temples, and I held my eyelids apart to stare at the sailless, landless, smokeless sea. I felt the tragedy of it all stealing away from my consciousness—and the agony from my flesh. . . . The woman held water to my lips—pleaded and prayed—as if she saw me leaving her.

"Look—the water is yellow!" she repeated. "We cannot be far. He—~~he~~ is pulling mightily."

I drew up with a last spasm of strength, and caught the giant's shoulder. He turned up to me—the great contorted face.

"If you're not square to the woman—if you don't serve her with your life—I'll come back and haunt you day and night until you kill yourself! Do you hear?" I was beating the words into his brain. The woman clung to me, calling my name.

"Huh!" the giant grunted.

"Do you hear and understand?"

"Huh!" came again.

I stared around at the glaring, brassy day, and it seemed as if a ball of light struck me down.

I heard the intoning of temple bells—it seemed for ages. Then I felt a hand. As I tried to grasp it, darkness and a different world intervened. Sometimes the intoning of the bells was like a harp in another room. . . . At length I looked about, and through a doorway. Cattle were passing upon a sun-baked land. Finally I felt the hand again. Penelope was there, and, bending low, hushed me to sleep. For days and days, it seemed to me, this happened—until something touched my lips, and I would not be hushed.

"We are in a little Hindu village," she whispered, "and all is well. They're very good to us—and every day you're stronger—the new life coming back."

It may have been another day that I asked: "And how long have we been here?"

"For nearly a month."

My mind struggled up from vague horrors, never to be marshalled again. "And the giant?" I whispered.

"He was heroic. For ten hours—from the moment we saw the yellow water—he did not cease to row. And in the afternoon we saw the land—and he pulled and pulled, sucking his brass locket—until we saw the lights on the shore. . . . On the beach he gave a great cry and fell. Then the Hindus came. . . . And now he is working in the fields with them—"

"Bring him to me," I said.

It seemed long afterward that the giant came in—afraid—twisting his hat in his hand. I caught the huge blackened wrist and held it to my forehead. . . . And I knew after that—as I could not know amid the horrors of the open boat—that, had he not pulled furiously away from the vortex of the sinking *Passion Flower*, in which I struggled, there would have been no open boat, and no Penelope.

THE POET OF THE PINES

By La Salle Corbell Pickett

"WHY are not your countrymen all poets, surrounded as they are by beautiful things to inspire them?" I asked a young Swiss.

"Because," he replied, "my people are so accustomed to beauty that it has no influence upon them."

They had never known anything but beauty: there were no sharp contrasts to clash, flint-like, and strike out sparks of divine fire.

Had the beauty of old Charleston produced the same negative effect, Southern literature would have suffered a distinct loss—if that may be regarded as lost which has never been possessed. For centuries the Queen of the Sea stood in a vision of splendor, the tumultuous waves of the Atlantic dashing at her feet, eternal sunshine crowning her royal brow. Her gardens were stately with oleanders and pomegranates, brilliant with jonquils and hyacinths, myrtle and gardenia. Roses of the olden time, Lancaster and York and the sweet pink cinnamon, breathed the fragrance of days long past. The hills that environed her were snowy with Cherokee roses and odorous with jasmine and honeysuckle. Her people dwelt in mansions in the corridors of which ancestral ghosts from old Colonial days kept guard.

In old Charleston that goes back in history almost a century before the Revolution and extends to the opening of the Sixties—the old Queen City by the Sea, which there are few left now to remember—was a circle of congenial creative souls just before the first shot at Fort Sumter heralded the destruction of the old-time life of the Colonial city. William Gilmore Simms was the head and mentor of the brilliant band, and the much younger men, Paul Hamilton Hayne and Henry Timrod, were the fiery souls that gave it the mental electricity necessary to furnish the motive power. Through all the coming days of trial and hardship, of aspiration and defeat, of watching from the towers of high achievement or lying prone upon the valley of failure, not one of that little circle ever lost the golden memory of those magic evenings in the home of the novelist and poet, the thinker and dreamer, William Gilmore Simms, the intellectual father of them all.

At that time in the old city was another picturesque home that

harked back to Colonial days—stately, veranda-circled, surrounded by that fascinating atmosphere of history and poetry known to those old dwellings alone of all the structures of the New World: the home of the Southern poet of Nature, Paul Hamilton Hayne. Its many-windowed front looked cheerfully out upon a wide lawn radiant with flowers of bygone fashion, loved by the poets of olden times, and bright with the greenery that kept perpetual summer around the historic dwelling. This beautiful pre-Revolutionary home was burned in the bombardment of Charleston, and with it was destroyed the library that had been the pride of the poet's heart.

In this old home the Poet of the Pines was born of a family that looked back to the opening days of the eighteenth century, when Charleston was young, glowing with the beauty of her birth into the forests of the New World, wearing proudly the tiara of her loyalty to King and Crown. Looking back along the road that stretched between the first Hayne, who helped to make of the old city a memory to be cherished on the page of history and a picture on the canvas of the present to awaken admiration, and the young soul that looked with poetic vision on the beginning of the new era, there is seen a long succession of brilliant names and powerful figures.

Paul Hayne was the great-grand-nephew of "the Martyr Hayne," who has given to Charleston her only authentic ghost-story, the scene of which was a brick dwelling which stood till 1896 at the corner of Atlantic and Meeting Streets. Colonel Isaac H. Hayne, a soldier of the Revolution, secured a parole, that he might be with his dying wife. While on parole he was ordered to fight against his country. Rather than be forced to the crime of treason, he broke his parole, was captured and condemned to death. From her beautiful, mahogany-panelled drawing-room in that old home where the two streets cross, his sister-in-law, who had gone with his two little children to plead for his life, watched as he passed on his way from the vault of the old Custom House, used then as a prison, to the gallows. "Return, return to us!" she called in an agony of grief. As he walked on he replied, "I will if I can." It is said that his old negro mammy, to whom he was always "my chile," ran out to the gate with the playthings she had fondly cherished since the days when they were to him irresistible attractions, crying, "Come back! Come back!" To both calls his heart responded with such longing love that when the soul was released the old home knew the step and the voice again. Ever afterward when eventide fell one standing at that window would hear a ghostly voice from the street below and steps upon the stairs and in the hall; footsteps of one coming—never going.

Paul Hamilton Hayne's uncle, Colonel Arthur P. Hayne, fought under Jackson at New Orleans, and was afterward United States Sena-

tor. Paul was nephew of Robert Y. Hayne, whose career as a statesman and an orator won for him a fame that has not faded with the years. With this uncle, Paul found a home in his orphaned childhood.

Of his sailor father, Lieutenant Hayne, his shadowy memory takes form in a poem, one stanza of which gives us a view of the brave seaman's life and death:

He perished not in conflict nor in flame,
No laurel garland rests upon his tomb;
Yet in stern duty's path he met his doom;
A life heroic, though unwed to fame.

Though he pathetically mourns:

Never in childhood have I blithely sprung
To catch my father's voice, or climb his knee.

still

Love limned his wavering likeness on my soul,
Till through slow growths it waxed a perfect whole
Of clear conceptions, brightening heart and mind.

That clear conception remained a lifelong treasure in the poet's heart.

Through a great ancestral corridor had Paul Hamilton Hayne descended, with soul enjewelled with all the gems of character and thought that had sparkled in the long gallery through which he had travelled into the earth-light.

In the school of Mr. Coates, in Charleston, he was fitted to enter Charleston College, a plain, narrow-fronted structure with six severely classic columns supporting the façade. It stood on the foundation of the "old brick barracks" held by the Colonial troops through a six-weeks' siege by twelve thousand British regulars under Sir Henry Clinton.

Hayne satisfied the hunger and thirst of his excursive and ardent mind by browsing in the Charleston Library on Broad and Church Streets. It may be that sometimes, on his way to that friendly resort, he passed the old house on Church Street which once sheltered General Washington; a substantial three-storied building with ornamental wood-work which might cause its later use as a bakery to seem out of harmony to any but *chefs* with high ideals of their art.

The Library of old Charleston was composed chiefly of English classics and the literature of France in the olden time when Europe meant something more than anarchy, clothes, and bargain-counter titles. A sample of the Young America of that early day asked an old gentleman, "Why are you always reading that old Montaigne?" The reply was, "Why, child, there is in this book all that a gentleman needs to think about," with the discreet addition, "Not a book for little

girls, though." If we find in our circle of poets a certain stateliness of style scarcely to be looked for in a somewhat new republic that might be expected to rush pell-mell after an idea and capture it by the sudden impact of a lusty blow, after the manner of the minute-men catching a red-coat at Lexington; if we observe in their writing certain old world expressions that woo us subtly, like the odor of lavender from a long-closed linen chest, we may attribute it to the fact that aristocratic old Charleston, though the first to assert her independence of the political yoke, yet clung tenaciously to the literary ideals of the Old World.

On Meeting Street was Apprentices' Library Hall, where Glidden led his hearers through the intricacies of Egyptian Archæology. Here Agassiz sometimes lectured on Zoölogy, and our youthful poet may have watched animals from the jungle climb up the blackboard at the touch of what would have been only a piece of chalk in any other hand, but became a magic creative force under the guidance of that wizard of science. Here he could have followed with Thackeray the varying fortunes and ethic vagaries of the royal Georges. His poetic soul may have kindled with the fire of Macready's "Hamlet" when, thinking that he was too far down the slope of life to hark back to the days of the youthful Dane, he proved that he still had the glow of the olden time in his soul by reading the part as only Macready could. In this old hall he may have looked upon the paintings which inspired him to create his own pictures, luminous with softly tinted word-colors.

Meeting Street seems to have been named with reference to its uses, for here, too, was the old theatre, gone long ago, where Fannie Ellsler danced with a wavering, quivering, shimmering grace that drove humming-birds to despair. In that theatre it may be that Paul Hayne heard Jenny Lind fill the night with a melody which would irradiate his soul throughout life and reproduce itself in the music-tones of his softly cadenced verse. There the ill-fated Adrienne Lecouvreur lived and died again in her wondrous transmigration into the soul of the great Rachel.

As a boy, Hayne's heart may have often thrilled to the voice of the scholarly Hugh Swinton Legare, as he made the heart of some classic old poem live in the music of his organ-tones.

A sensitive soul surrounded by the influences of life in old Charleston had many incentives to high and harmonious expression.

That the Queen City of the Sea did not claim the privilege of the fickleness alleged to be incident to the feminine character is illustrated by the fact that she had but two postmasters in seventy years, a circumstance worthy of note "in days like these," "when ev'ry gate is thronged with suitors, all the markets overflow," and the disbursing counter is crowded with claimants for the rewards due for commendable activity in the campaign. One of those two was Peter Bascot, an ap-

pointee of Washington. The other was Alfred Huger, "the last of the Barons," who had refused to take the office in the time of Bascot.

In old Charleston the servants were the severest sticklers for propriety, and the butlers of the old families rivalled one another in the loftiness of their standards. Jack, the butler of "the last of the Barons," was wide awake to the demands of his position, and when an old sea captain, an intimate friend of Mr. Huger, dining with the family, asked for rice when the fish was served he was first met with a chill silence. Thinking that he had not been heard, he repeated the request. Jack bent and whispered to him. With a burst of laughter, the Captain said, "Judge, you have a treasure. Jack has saved me from disgrace, from exposing my ignorance. He whispered, 'That would not do, sir: *we* never eats rice with fish.'"

Russell's book-shop on King Street was a favorite place of meeting for the Club which recognized Simms as king by divine right. From these pleasant gatherings grew the idea of giving to Charleston a medium through which the productions of her thought might go out to the world. In April, 1857, appeared *Russell's Magazine*, bearing the names of Paul Hamilton Hayne and W. B. Carlisle as editors, though upon Hayne devolved all the editorial work and much of the writing for the new publication. He had helped to keep alive the *Southern Literary Messenger* after the death of Mr. White and the departure of Poe for other fields of labor, had assisted Richards on the *Southern Literary Gazette* and had been associate editor of Harvey's *Spectator*. For Charleston had long been ambitious to become the literary centre of the South. The object of *Russell's Magazine* was to uphold the cause of literature in Charleston and in the South, and incidentally to stand by the friends of the young editor, who carried his partisanship of William Gilmore Simms so far as to permit the publication of a severe criticism of Dana's "Household Book of Poetry" because it did not include any of the verse of the Circle's rugged mentor. *Russell's* had a brilliant and brief career, falling upon silence in March, 1860; probably not much to the regret of Paul Hayne, who, while too conscientious to withhold his best effort from any enterprise that claimed him, was too distinctly a poet not to feel somewhat like Pegasus in pound when tied down to the editorial desk.

This quiet life, in which the gentle soul of Hayne, with its delicate sensitiveness, appreciation of all beauty, and poetic insight, found congenial environment, soon suffered a rude interruption. As Charleston was the first to throw off the yoke of Great Britain and draw up a constitution which she thought fitted for independent government, so did she in a later generation first express the determination of South Carolina to break the bonds that held her turbulent political soul in uncongenial association.

Hayne heard the twelve-hour cannonade of Fort Sumter's hundred and forty guns echoing over the sea, and saw the Stars and Bars flutter above the walls of the old fort. He saw Generals Bee and Johnson come back from Manassas, folded in the battle flag for which they had given their lives, to lie in state in the City Hall at the marble feet of Calhoun, the great leader whom they had followed to the inevitable end. General Lee was in the old town for a little while. A man said to him, "It is difficult for so many men to abandon their business for the war." The General replied, "Believe me, sir, the business of this generation is the war." In the spirit of this answer Charleston met the crisis so suddenly come upon her.

All the young poet's patriotic love and inherited martial instinct urged him to the battle, but his frail physique withheld him from the field, and he took service as an aide on the staff of Governor Pickens.

At the close of the war, wrecked in health, with only the memory of his beautiful home and library left to him, with not even a piece of the family silver remaining to him from the "march to the sea," Hayne went to the pine-barrens of Georgia, eighteen miles from Augusta, to build a new home.

When the first man and woman were sent out from their garden home, it was not as a punishment for sin, but as an answer to their ambitious quest for knowledge and their new-born longing for a wider life. It was not that the gate of Eden was closed upon them; it was that the gates of all the Edens of the world were opened for them and for the generations of their children. One of these gates opened upon the Eden of Copse Hill, where the poet of nature found a home and all friendly souls met a welcome that filled the pine-barrens with joy for them. Of Copse Hill the poet says:

A little apology for a dwelling was perched on the top of a hill overlooking in several directions hundreds of leagues of pine-barrens; there was as yet neither garden nor inclosure near it, and a wilder, more desolate and savage-looking home could hardly have been seen east of the prairies.

What that "little apology of a dwelling" was to him is best pictured in his own words:

On a steep hillside, to all airs that blow,
Open, and open to the varying sky,
Our cottage homestead, smiling tranquilly,
Catches morn's earliest and eve's latest glow;
Here, far from worldly strife and pompous show,
The peaceful seasons glide serenely by,
Fulfill their missions and as calmly die
As waves on quiet shores when winds are low.

The Poet of the Pines

Fields, lonely paths, the one small glimmering rill
 That twinkles like a wood-fay's mirthful eye,
 Under moist bay-leaves, clouds fantastical
 That float and change at the light breeze's will,—
 To me, thus lapped in sylvan luxury,
 Are more than death of kings, or empires' fall.

Here with "the bonny brown hand" in his that was "dearer than all dear things of earth," Paul Hayne found a life that was filled with beauty, notwithstanding its occasional moments of discouragement and pain. We like to remember that always with him, helping him bear the burdens of life, was that wifely hand of which the poet could say, "The hand which points the path to heaven, yet makes a heaven of earth."

On sunny days he paced to and fro under the pines, the many windows of his mind opened to the studies in light and shade and his soul attuned to the music of the drifting winds and the whispering trees. When Nature was in darkened mood and gave him no invitation to the open court wherein she reigned, he walked up and down his library floor, engrossed with some beautiful thought which, in harmonious garb of words, would go forth and bless the world with its music.

The study, of which he wrote:

This is my world! within these narrow walls
 I own a princely service

was perhaps as remarkable a room as any in which student ever spent his working hours, the walls being papered wholly with cuts from papers and periodicals. The furniture was decorated in the same way, even to the writing-desk, which was an old work-bench left by some carpenters. All had been done by the "bonny brown hands" that never wearied in loving service.

Many of his friends made pilgrimages to the little cottage on the hill, where they were cordially welcomed by the poet, who, happy in his home with his wife and little son, lived among the flowers which he tended with his own hands, surrounded by the majesty of the pines whose

Passion and mystery murmur through the leaves,—
 Passion and mystery touched by deathless pain,
 Whose monotone of long, low anguish grieves
 For something lost that shall not live again.

Hither came Henry Timrod, doomed to failure, loss, and early death, but with soul eternally alive with the fires of genius. In the last days of his sad and broken life William Gilmore Simms came to renew old memories and recount the days when life in old Charleston was iridescent as the waves that washed the feet of the Queen of the

Sea. Congenial spirits they were who met in that charming little study where Paul Hayne walked "the fields of quiet Arcadies" and

. . . gleamings of the lost, heroic life
Flashed through the gorgeous vistas of romance.

Hayne had the subtle power of touching the friendliness in the hearts of those who were far away, as well as of the comrades who had walked with him along the road of life. Often letters came from friends in other lands, known to him only by that wireless intuitional telegraphy whereby kindred souls know each other, though hands have not met nor eyes looked into eyes. Many might voice the thought expressed by one: "I may boast that Paul Hayne was my friend, though it was never my good fortune to meet him." Many a soul was upheld and strengthened by him, as was that of a man who wrote that he had been saved from suicide by reading the "Lyric of Action." His album held autographed photographs of many writers, among them Charles Kingsley, William Black, and Wilkie Collins. He cherished an ivy vine sent him by Blackmore from Westminster Abbey.

Hayne's many-windowed mind looked out upon all the phases of the beauty of Nature. Her varied moods found in him a loving response. He awaited her coming as the devotee at the temple gate waits for the approach of his Divinity:

I felt, through dim, awe-laden space,
The coming of thy veiled face;
And in the fragrant night's eclipse
The kisses of thy deathless lips,
Like strange star-pulses, throbbed through space!

Whether it is drear November and

. . . winds foreboding fill the desolate night
And die at dawning down wild woodland ways,

or in May "couched in cool shadow," he hears

The bee-throngs murmurous in the golden fern,
The wood-doves veiled by depths of flickering green,

for him the music of the spheres is in it all. Whether at midnight

The moon, a ghost of her sweet self,
. . .
Creeps up the gray, funereal sky
Wearily, how wearily,

or morning comes "with gracious breath of sunlight," it is a part of glorious Nature, his star-crowned Queen, his sun-clad goddess.

To no other heart has the pine forest come so near unfolding its immemorial secret. That poet-mind was a wind-harp, and its quivering strings echoed to every message that came from the dim old quivers on the "soft whispers of the twilight breeze," the flutterings of the newly awakened morn or the crash of the storm. "The Dryad of the Pine" bent "earth-yearning branches" to give him loving greeting and receive his quick response:

Leaning on thee, I feel the subtlest thrill
 Stir thy dusk limbs, tho' all the heavens are still,
 And 'neath thy rings of rugged fretwork mark
 What seems a heart-throb muffled in the dark.

"The imprisoned spirits of all winds that blow" echoed to his ear from the heart of the pine-cone fallen from "the wavering height of yon monarchical pine."

When a glorious pine, to him a living soul, falls under the axe he hears "the wail of Dryads in their last distress."

In the greenery of his loved and loving pines, with memories happy, though touched to tender sadness by the sorrows that had come to the old-time group of friends, blessed with the companionship of the two loving souls who were dearest to him of all the world, he sang the melodies of his heart till a cold hand swept across the strings of his wonderful harp and chilled them to silence.

In his last year of earth he was invited to deliver at Vanderbilt University a series of lectures on poetry and literature. Before the invitation reached him he had "fallen into that perfect peace that waits for all."



THE WHIP-POOR-WILL

BY HELEN HICKS BATES

THE call of the whip-poor-will
 In shadowy, woodland places,
 When all else sleeps so still—
 The call of the whip-poor-will,
 Insistent, clear and shrill,
 Floods the vast night spaces—
 The call of the whip-poor-will
 In shadowy, woodland places.

A BELATED ROSEBUD

By Emily Newell Blair

WHEN I asked Lucy Frey to spend the summer with me in Colorado, I made two conditions. "First," I began impressively, "you must agree to put yourself, your wardrobe, and your mind unreservedly in my hands. Second, you are to forget absolutely that you ever saw a school-room, much less taught in one, and must become to all intents and purposes my twenty-year-old daughter, who never went to college or had a serious thought in her head. Mind," I continued sternly, "if you ever mention your work, your life, or display that intellect of yours, I'll bring you right straight home."

"I might learn to conceal my scorned profession, dear Fairy Godmother, but how do you propose to metamorphose a thirty-year-old woman into a twenty-year-old débutante? Unfortunately, years and physique are not as malleable as conversation."

I held up my finger warningly. "There you go! No more of that old-maid philosophy, Lucy."

"But, Cousin Lydia, I *am* thirty. I *am* an old maid. How can even you mitigate those calamities?"

"Put yourself fearlessly into my hands, Lucy, and be thankful you are not a pale blonde. That might be hopeless. Now, you, with your indiscriminate fawn-colored hair, could go back ten years at a jump if you just changed the searching look of your big gray eyes into a dreamy one, and dropped that consecrated-to-a-mighty-purpose expression about your mouth."

"And how am I to effect such a change?"

"By obeying instructions. Agree to do as I advise, and I'll promise you the most exciting, happy summer of your life. Do it for my sake, Lucy," I urged. "You know I love you, and I have longed for a grown-up daughter all my life—just such a daughter as you would make under my guiding finger. Besides, it is your last opportunity to pose as a girl, if you get the Normal position in the fall that you have applied for."

Finally I won her over, the dear child consenting wholly for my sake, though the smile of anticipation she let slip convinced me that my philanthropy was well planned.

I've known Lucy Frey all her life. Her mother was a sort of cousin of mine, and that mother took Lucy's youth in her two selfish hands and squeezed it dry. She was an invalid, and Lucy cared for her with an intense devotion that showed me then her capacity for love and life. This lasted until Lucy was twenty-five. Then her mother mercifully died, but self-effacement and service had by that time made Lucy into a drab little body garbed in gray and tan skirts and limp shirtwaists and wearing her hair in a tight, ugly wisp. No wonder her pupils called her "Old Dobbins."

I am not a stupid woman, and I had studied Lucy's possibilities carefully, so when I had arranged her soft hair in little puffs and tantalizing curls and put her into a bright blue, short-skirted suit with touches of white on jacket and hat to bring out the clearness of her skin, adding low brown shoes for a further suggestion of girlishness, her rejuvenation was well begun. But it was only a beginning. She rebelled so often and so strenuously that I saw I must change her mental state, too. I decided to call her Lucia. I told her that Lucy was no longer stylish, but my real reason was to convey to her subconscious mind a new suggestion under the altered nomenclature. I didn't want to use the same handle her mother had mopped her around with. Lucia, as I pronounced it—the soft, Italian accent—suggested subtlety, lightness, and grace, while Lucy was final and harsh.

Then I surrounded her with an attitude. I simply enveloped her, in conversation, in look and manner, with my attitude of fond mother admiring her gay, foolish, interesting young daughter. It is attitudes that count. A wind-storm or a cloudburst makes lots of racket, but it is the insistent sprinkle of the garden hose and the steady rays of sunlight that produce flowers out of tiny seeds.

I had picked out a fair-sized summer hotel in the mountains. Somehow, I think the mountains make one feel younger than the sea-shore. Whether the dry air kindles one's spirits, giving the fire of youth, or the great heights above the horizon suggest youth's ideals, or the everlastingness of their hoary age makes one feel correspondingly young and foolish by contrast, I can't say. But years of experience have taught me that people are younger and sillier in the mountains than at the shore.

The usual crowd was there: young married women devoted to bridge and dress, older women equally devoted to health and genealogy, and young things reminding one of the over-oxygenated rabbits in physiology experiments.

Lucia improved at once. I am sure it was the clothes. Never before had the child realized them, and actually their touch was as stimulating as an elixir. Always before she had dressed down to her

serious square mouth. Now, according to my scheme, her lovely eyes, which always gave me the sense of something being unrevealed, became the challenging, focussing point of one's attention, and when one finally noticed her mouth he had an uncertain wonder as to which controlled her, and by that very uncertainty was attracted and held. Blue and pink shades and dainty, frilly, fairy designs accentuated the dreamy quality of her eyes. Even her tailored suits and waists conveyed in touches of embroidery the same subtle note. And most important of all, her frocks expressed youth, innocent, unformed, indefinite youth.

The entertainment the resort offered consisted of walks in the direction of the mountains, horseback riding in the direction of the plains, and hops at the various hotels. I would not permit Lucia to play bridge. I kept her on the move. And oh, I was most particular about where she went, and how. I've a knack with young people. They like me almost as much as I like them, and in a few days I was the most popular chaperon in the place.

There were several college boys and a few men. One of the boys "took up," as the phrase goes, with Lucia. He could n't have been a day over twenty-two. He wore baggy trousers, striped clothes, neckties and socks to match, and was called Tom. I certainly had a time starting them off together. Lucia would persist in treating him as a pupil.

"Don't you think you ought to——" she began one evening.

"Oh, Lucia," I interrupted her, "please go get me a cape."

Then I changed my mind and decided that I wanted a jacket and went up myself, leaving Tom on the steps waiting.

When I joined Lucia I sat right down in our room and told her a few things.

"But I can't act as if I loved him!" she cried, horrified.

"Of course not, you ninny, but you can act as if you wanted him to like you."

"You mean, like that Craycroft girl?"

"Exactly. You could n't find a better model."

It was awfully hard at first. Lucia would begin a sentence, look at me, flush, and end it entirely differently from her first intention.

Overhearing her: "I do not approve of——" I appeared by her side in time to inspire: "—of crooked neckties. By their ties ye shall know them, is my motto."

Again, beginning her conversation: "I wonder if they have three kinds of certificates in Colorado——" she completed with the startling words: "Marriage certificates, I mean—engagement, wedding, and divorce."

This soon gave her a reputation for being funny. They thought

she did it on purpose, and, under the inspiration of their laughter and appreciation, she began to do it on purpose. Pretty soon it had become her style.

In the beginning she insisted on my going with her. She was afraid to go alone with Tom. She did n't know what to talk about. And no wonder! Whenever I overheard her, she was talking about his ideals and his future. In that way, of course, she was young. She had never gotten past that stage of dealing in futures.

Then suddenly she stopped asking me to go along. It was about the same time she asked to borrow my bracelets. I could have jumped for joy. That was her first desire to bedeck herself. Presently she asked if I thought a ribbon tied around her curls Madame Le Brun style would become her. I was almost as surprised as at the first blush a speech of Tom's had brought to her face.

One night she and Tom had a quarrel, and he took the Craycroft girl up to the Sunnyside to a hop. Lucia had been out riding, and she told me she was too tired to go. A new arrival, a Professor of History at the State University, was talking to me on the veranda, when Lucia sauntered up. I introduced them, and the Professor continued his conversation with me as if he hardly noticed her at all. He was deep in his theory when Lucia broke in eagerly:

"Oh, but don't you think——" I sneezed violently—"that dancing is more fun than history?" she finished.

The poor man was horrified, and I was embarrassed. Lucia in her old state would have enjoyed him, but now she laughed freely and led the conversation clear away from history. He could n't help himself, and Lucia seemed to have concluded that if she could not talk about history, neither should he.

We—the Professor and I—had been speaking early in the evening of a common friend of ours, whose career had been ruined by his marriage to a gay young wife. The Professor had spoken with strong feeling of his dislike for young girls, flattering me, of course, by contrast. But Lucia, utterly oblivious, rattled on until, slightly provoked, I excused myself and left them sitting there.

The next morning she told me that she had taken him up to the Sunnyside to the dance "just to pay Tom back." I looked at her in perfect amazement. If you'll believe me, the dent in the corner of her mouth had dissolved into a dimple, her gray eyes flashed, and the warfare between them and her mouth was absolutely fascinating. I was almost unstrung by what I had brought to pass. It is most uncanny to see a rose go back to budhood again, or a blasted bud burst into perfect bloom, and one of these things had happened.

I saw that the time had come for me to hold hands off, so I sat back and said nothing. I was awfully thankful for that dear Pro-

fessor. He quite became my stand-by, and it was queer, too, for Lucia nearly worried him to death. It was distressing to me when I knew how he felt about "silly young things," as he called them. I hinted as much to Lucia, but she only retorted that I must take my own medicine, and proceeded as before to take the patient man to dances, to drag him off mountain climbing, and to tease him about his riding. Plainly she only used him to torment Tom, and, just as plainly, the dear Professor squirmed.

It went on so for several weeks, Tom being more devoted, the Professor more squirmy, and Lucia more pleased with herself. I had never dreamed of such a change as this. She not only looked young, she felt young. She was n't pretending to a good time, she was having it—a glorious, inconsequential good time. I was frightfully worried. I've always known that folk have to climb Fool Hill at some period or other of their lives, and if it does not come when they are young, as nature intended it, they are likely to stumble mighty hard on their way down again. I had to acknowledge that Lucia appeared to be a distractingly sweet young girl. Evidently Tom found her so, and was becoming seriously involved. I could n't have Lucia marrying him, and yet she acted as if she might be considering it. I thought of asking the Professor's advice, and then, remembering what he thought of silly girls, decided to speak first to Lucia, though I feared that this intoxicating cup of admiration had so gone to her head that she would not listen.

The night I came to this decision she was at a dance at one of the other hotels, and I waited up to speak to her, lest my courage ooze out before morning. It was one o'clock before she returned. She wore a long, cream-colored cloak, and a motor-veil wrapped around her head. The first glimpse I caught of her face showed me that something had happened. Her cheeks were red and an amazed happiness glistened in her eyes.

She seated herself carefully in the low chair, and then for awhile she seemed to forget that I was there. One moment she seemed remote and colorless, and the next she glowed with life and emotion.

"Lucia"—I spoke sharply because of the fear that my warning would be too late—"tell me what it is."

"He loves me, Cousin Lydia," she said simply. "He loves me—and he told me so."

"But do you love him?" I asked in panic.

She looked at me proudly. "Do I love him!" she repeated, and my question was fully, fatally answered.

After a long silence, she got up, and composedly the old Lucy spoke: "Of course he does n't know my age. I thought best for you to tell him. In a way, you owe us that."

"Me tell him? Did n't you? Does n't he know? Lucy Frey, for pity's sake, tell me what you did say." I shuddered as I pictured myself talking common-sense to that infatuated, love-sick youth.

"He says that he hopes to win you. You are such friends. He meant to ask your permission, but he could n't wait. He says you don't approve of such a difference in ages, but then neither did he, before he met me. He told me how he had fallen in love with me against his will, but now he knows it was my youth that attracted him. He is only thirty-five, and love——"

"Thirty-five! Lucy Frey, whom are you talking about?"

"Why, the Professor, of course. Who else would propose to me?" she demanded indignantly.

Well, I certainly had been a fool!

"Now, sit down again and tell me exactly about it, and what I am to say, and why?"

It was not a pleasant task to which I arose the next morning, but I am no coward, and, after fortifying myself with a headache tablet, I went to meet the Professor. I had promised Lucia to tell him the whole truth about her age, her masquerade, and her foolishness. Men don't like to be fooled, and I was very doubtful as to how he would take it, in spite of Lucy's faith. I was not in love, and she was.

The Professor was waiting for me. His manner conveyed the impression that he had been waiting since the beginning of time for just this opportunity.

I suggested that we walk down to the spring, as we would have no privacy on the veranda. He put his case fervently, but with dignity, and apologized for not having spoken to me before. "But," he finished, "I lost my head, you know—she is so fascinating."

Then I told my whole story, just as I have told it here, sparing neither one of us. He tried to stop me, but I went ahead as steadily, as voluminously, as the cataract of Lodore, piling fact on fact, and ending with: "You are in the unusual position, Professor, of falling in love with one lady and finding her another."

With a happy smile the Professor handed me a letter, saying:

"Read that. I received it this morning."

In something of a daze, I read a letter asking him to report on the availability of one, Miss Lucy Frey, for the chair of History in the State Normal, and enclosing her application and photograph. The letter stated that she was summering at the Springs.

"Your words this morning have kindly explained this," he said. "It is true that I fell desperately in love with Lucia, but I confess that I'm awfully pleased that there is a Lucy, too. I hope I may marry both."

Without another word, I went to call Lucy.

THE HERITAGE OF THE SERPENT

By Stanley Olmsted

THE rather exaggerated crystal vase of clove pinks had been moved to one side. The waiter himself had done so, deferentially, with an effect of respectful apology. The lady in green swung the menu upside down by its gilded handle. She swept the room with a glance which paused at the fern-fronded fountain, with that manner of seeing nothing, attainable only by the especially observant. All the light was a coruscation: filtered and sifted through pink, or violet, or yellow crystals. It may have been that the lady in green found satisfaction in the fact that the electric lamp at the table selected by her escort was bejewelled with warm rose. If so, she gave no sign. She listened absently.

"You see, the effort of Adam is to determine Eve's indebtedness," continued the man in the Norfolk, taking up the conversation just where he had left off.

"And pay up!" The lady in green shifted the lamp to a more effective luminousness.

"You're too quick for me. The man's idea is to get even in the long run, if he can. That is what I should have said, in symbolistic language, had you let me finish."

"I shall never let you finish,—never, that is, if I can help it."

"How to keep you from helping it seems to be my main idea about now. I chase around after it—the main idea, I mean."

The lady in green glanced to right and left to assure herself they were quite inaudible. "We're clever, of course," she assured the man in the Norfolk, "but we probably sound foolish."

"I should n't wonder," he agreed. "Though when you laugh like that there's all the wisdom of Eden back of you."

She had for this the mock of a sigh. "Never, never, had I dreamed," she declared, "of being so ornately interpreted." Then she laughed again,—a tinkling laugh, with a range of chimes in it.

In the gallery, directly above them, the orchestra of three or four really fluent musicians opened fire with a shudder of tone. But it proved a mere tremolo introducing a rag-time.

"They play that thing with a gusto that can only be born of their innate contempt," he observed feelingly. "It is always easy to go magnificently at what is beneath us."

"In short," she continued for him, "we have to be quite at our worst in order to be at our best."

"I believe we're in unison at last," he responded. "The road to material success looks downward and not upward—with women as with concrete things."

She was drawing off her gloves. "Here comes the waiter," she reminded him, "with our Turkish coffee."

"I shall do my best with it," he said. "Remember, though, Turkish coffee is *your* idea. I haven't yet acquired the taste."

"Poor boy!" she condoned. "When you learn to like this sort of thing, it's going to be all up with you. Yet I wish you would."

He was through being a college lad, but very young for all that. Though he could n't for the life of him explain it, he felt himself blushing.

"Such richness—look at him!" she cried. "Here—I'll screen you with these."

She moved the crystal vase of clove pinks to its original position in the centre of their table. She was thus effectively, though not completely, hidden from him; and her voice came caressingly through the perfume.

"I'm going to tell you something," she began, "while I can't see you. First let me fix your coffee just right. The waiter did n't understand it. So! How nice to be right here where the fountain splashes! And now they're playing Pagliacci, too. Pagliacci was surely an opera written for first-class hotel tea-rooms. Bum-bum-bum, *sque—ak!* Delicious! Dear me, I was almost forgetting I had a confession——"

"The flowers are in the way," he objected, and set them aside against the wall. "I'd hate to hear any confession from you without looking you hard in the eye. Now begin."

He was leaning forward, almost straining, against the table. The lady in green did not return his look. She sipped at her turgid coffee as though it were an end and not a means.

"Now begin," he demanded once more. "Or I will for you. On the whole, I believe I'd do better for you than you could for yourself. To begin with—you don't know that I know it, but—you're a married woman."

"How did you surmise it?"

He settled back in his chair. "I just ran across it. You see, I—I ran into your husband."

She turned suddenly pale. "But it's a joke!" she cried, with a

terrorized look at her left hand. "This wedding-ring I've just theatrically uncovered—my vague assumption of broader experience—the undercurrent I've tried to make you feel ever since we met so—so peculiarly—a week ago—all, all a joke. I have no husband. What do you mean?"

"I ran into him," maintained the youth. "I know everything about him. You're a married woman."

It was her turn to know a reactive rosiness, following her pallor: a rosiness deepening to crimson under her green and silver flower-pot hat.

"You look now," he said, with entirely regained composure—"you look now like a tiny basket of Jacqueminot roses, upset."

"Move out the pinks!" she begged with a heroic feint at lightness. He obeyed.

"And now tell me," she laughed, but her voice still trembled—"tell me about this extraordinary creature who seems to have made you so very positive of his claim upon me."

"First," he deliberated, "let us review the circumstances of our brief but—on my part, at least!—totally ardent acquaintance. On the afternoon of Tuesday, seven days since, I was lunging down Fifth Avenue on top of the electric bus—"

"Delightfully impossible things, aren't they?" she broke in. "They sort of suggest the Hindu idea: the mirage of the world, surging before the delighted eyes of Krishna!"

"Unlike Krishna, who doubtless looked ahead, my eyes were fixed below me," he proceeded. "We were passing a white limousine car drawn up to the curb. It was a very white limousine, which accounts for my absently noting something dark beneath it."

"Are you moralizing," again interrupted the lady, "or merely putting contrasts into your picture?"

"Both," he replied. "For three months now—to go on—I've been knocking around the studios of New York. I have learned to recognize just two things at sight: a good Bokhara rug, and real Russian sable."

"And a blonde—and a brunette!"

"Not that," he said. "They're too interchangeable."

She shook her head. "Go on. I've heard it all before, of course, but I like to hear it over again."

"New ideas come with practice. This story improves with every telling," he defended. "Now, this shadowy thing coiled a rich attenuate length under the street side of the snowy automobile. Palpably, it was a valuable bit of fur. Just as palpably, some one inside the car had dropped it. I tried to signal the sole occupant. But she was absorbed in the profoundest reverie. Who shall say what dreams were

hers? And there was the merest fraction of an instant, of course. I rather surmised she would n't approve of shouting. There was nothing else to do: I must climb out over everybody, and down, and spring off with what agility was left me as ex-high-jumper, not to mention quick-stepper. Then came the real drama."

"Et cetera," she tried now to cut him off, "and a woman!"

"Another one, yes. She too had seen the Russian sable. And her advantages were two—or perhaps we'd better say five. First, she was already on terra firma; second, she was swifter, softer, more agile. She made a little dart from the crowd of pedestrians on the pavement, like a graceful kingfisher. She uprighted herself so quickly that you were n't sure she'd done it. She passed on. As it turned out afterward, she was a brunette. At the time, I was sure she was a blonde. She had the soul of one."

"She actually is, they tell me," explained the lady—"on alternate days."

He had the briefest instant of musing. "After all, it must be a fine tonic thing—to suit your complexion to your better judgment!"

"From the first," she declared with more vim than she had yet shown, "I've had a sneaking notion you quite admired that woman."

"Undoubtedly. That is about the only reason I can assign to my giving chase. I reached her side. 'Madame,' I said. '*Mademoiselle*,' she corrected encouragingly. 'You have a valuable fur, *Mademoiselle*,' I enthused. 'Ah, you mean ze Russian sable I carry,' she gushed. '*Cher monsieur*, it ees an heirloom.' 'Ah, then,' I suggested, 'perhaps you will part with it—it is the American custom. In New York, heirlooms are invariably sold. Anything else is bad form, I assure you. Now, I can find you an instantaneous purchaser for this one not three feet away from where you picked it up. I guarantee a twenty-dollar gold-piece on my own account; and the lady to whom it belongs may decide to increase my appropriation—though, of course, I don't guarantee that.'"

"Then that was the secret—you paid her twenty dollars for me." The lady in green quivered with mortification. "Why did n't you tell me that part before?" she cried. "Why did n't you tell me?"

"Don't begin to chide me for all the things I haven't told you," he pleaded. "There are too many of 'em. Let us drop the narrative of the French lady anyhow. Let us drop it even as the French lady herself forthwith and immediately dropped her French, for an effective, if slightly chorus-girl, species of English, and became in turn vituperative, frightened, tractable, penitent, and commercial. Let us cease sympathizing with her. She has both temperament and talent. She may earn a Russian sable of her very own some day. The point is that since that acquaintance, so oddly begun, you've tried to enact all

sorts of mystery. You've tried to appear ultra-worldly, if not ultra-wicked. You've tried to leave me in torturing doubt on many points. You've tantalized, gloated, and exulted. And yet I started out with certain data and equipment touching you that you could n't, in the nature of things, suspect."

He paused. His ascendancy was complete. The lady facing him looked much more the ingénue she detested, than the sophisticated worldling she would fain have appeared.

"Of course you did n't realize at all," he went on, "that the Fifth Avenue bus on the very front seat of which I sat had made a halt of several leisurely seconds just above your car. That was before I had seen the sable. From my point of vantage, I was undisturbed in my study of your face. 'She is a dissembler,' I warned myself. 'Look out for her!' After the meeting, not knowing what else to do, I headed straight for this hotel. I think I was dazed with happiness. At all events, I had a distinct and awkward shock. I ran straight into your husband."

The lady in green started from her seat. Every trace of self-possession had left her. He spoke with a cool assurance. If only her conscience were quite clear. But it was n't. On this winter's reaction from too much chaperonage, she had done daring things like this before. But they had always seemed so harmless. And always she had felt sure she had known her ground. Why, even this boy here—she knew all about him—had been careful to have his record and family looked up by doting old Uncle George that very first afternoon. If Mamma had n't been an invalid, and the daughter on a sort of holiday, he would have developed into the most formal of fully-informed acquaintances. What man, then, had dared assume the right to a practical joke like this? Her husband! She shuddered. That was the sort of jesting that did actual harm—that played into the hands of scandal. And she had been helping it out with veiled insinuations and a fake wedding-ring. She had made herself appear a party to it, even if he knew the truth.

"I—I want to go," she stammered, near to tears. "I don't know whom you ran into, I'm sure, but all men are odious. I shall never speak to another—except Uncle George. I shall enter a convent. Some man has lied. He may have thought it funny, but Uncle George shall see him punished."

"Uncle George shall see him punished all right," he acquiesced, "but—theoretically, you know, he did n't lie. Once at our University meet I said to my only supposed rival: 'You're a beaten man.' The race had n't been run, but I spoke the truth—in the psychological sense, you know. And now I repeat to you: *You're a married woman.* Yours may be the heritage of the serpent—subtlest among 'em—but

you can't escape me. I ran into your husband in one of these deceptive plate-glass mirrors they have here at the end of corridors. As I've said before, I was dazed with happiness, and it was a distinct shock."

The pacification of the little lady in green was not instantaneously accomplished. But long after the Turkish coffee lay cold and black and molasses-thick in its pot of burnished brass (she really liked Turkish coffee far less than she would have had him think) she confided to the man in the Norfolk the thing she had meant to confide when he took her confession from her mouth.

"You did n't know I even saw you, of course," she told him. "But when the bus stood there those several seconds I was studying you, too—studying every inch of you. You looked the way I've always dreamed a man ought to look—though it's a shame to tell you so—you're getting so vain already. Of course I dropped the Russian sable on purpose. I just took the odd chance on fishing for you with it."

The orchestra above them began certain heavenly strains: a divine voice began to sing an aria from "Madame Butterfly."

But it was only a phonographic voice; not worth craning for, surely.

"With a woman, as with concrete things," he said, holding out her loosened fur which had slid to the floor, "the road to success looks downward and not upward. Losing this thing a second time would have put you in an awful temper."

'TWIXT THEE AND ME

It is very sad to speak "Seven Languages"—badly.

THERE are more plain than pretty women getting ready for Heaven.

It is better to hesitate than to be—lost.

GOD made more Fools than Sages, for which many of us have reason to give thanks.

DOLL wives should not be measured upon womanly yard-sticks. It is not just.

THE tragedies of Love are comedies to Indifference.

To be loved makes a Knight humble, a Trickster vain.

Minna Thomas Antrim

FIRST LESSONS IN SURF-BATHING

By Sigmund Spaeth

FOR males: Never bathe alone. It is not only dangerous, but unprofitable. An audience is almost essential to successful surf-bathing. A feminine companion will be found most satisfactory. If you are possessed of an Apollo-like figure, that fact will be most impressive when you are in a bathing-suit. If your contour is not fit for public presentation, the friendly waves will hide your shortcomings.

There are two ways of entering the water. One is to lead your fair companion daintily, a step at a time, into the fearsomely inviting depths, helping her over every inch of foam which might be called a "breaker." (For this purpose, it is important that you should hold both her hands in yours.) Answer her shivers and gurgles of delight with superior smiles, toss the water aside contemptuously with knees and shoulders; in short, adopt the attitude of "man, the protector of femininity." The other method of entrance is more violent, and in some ways more effective. Leave your companion on the beach with the explanation that you "must get wet first." Then run at top speed into the water, leaping over the billows like a frightened deer, and finally plunging forward on your stomach, with every appearance of complete fearlessness. She will admire your agility, your strength, and your courage. Return, smiling and nonchalant, with some such conventional expression as, "Is n't it glorious?" After this the actions of the first method may be repeated. If the lady is of the athletic type, however, she may prefer to be dragged swiftly through the water, even to be ducked and roughly handled, to show what a jolly good fellow she is.

After getting into the surf the greatest difficulties are encountered. Do not laugh immoderately at any of the lady's jokes. A mouthful of salt water will be your reward. Stand facing your partner, grasping her elbows, while she grasps yours. A slow and solemn dance may then be begun, to which the ocean will be found to supply a fairly good rhythm. As you bounce up and down, you may utter such polite ejaculations as "Heavenly! Divine! Oh, rapture! Oh, bliss!" Your companion will perceive the ambiguity of your remarks and blush prettily.

If a particularly large breaker comes rolling in, lift your companion

high in the air, at the same time allowing the water to pass completely over your head. This is always considered an act of particular heroism. The slight discomfort attending it is more than balanced by the admiration and sympathy you will enjoy. If the lady accidentally lands upon your foot and notices the look of pain in your countenance, pass it off with a jest about "the undertoe." You will find that very little more is needed in the way of conversation.

For females: Always rest upon the beach at least two hours before entering the water. By that time you will have a ring of admirers large enough to give you a wide choice in the matter of a bathing companion. Select the brownest, handsomest, and most athletic of the men, making sure that his bathing-suit harmonizes well with your own. Walk slowly with him to the water's edge, giving all the observers enough time for admiring comment. On first wetting your feet, gasp slightly or emit a melodious scream, at the same time clutching your partner's hands tightly. He will assume a protecting air, mingled with frank adoration. Cling to him more and more as the water grows deeper. By this time he will be your willing slave. At the first really high breaker, throw both arms around his neck and half strangle him in your embrace. The more you maul him, the greater will be his ecstasy.

If he succeeds in getting you into the quieter water beyond the breakers, at once suggest to him that you would like to learn to float. He will teach you with alacrity. Sink slowly and carefully back into his arms, reclining in a graceful position. He will hold you safely and tenderly, never realizing that his support is quite unnecessary. After about fifteen minutes of this you will be ready for a continuation of the more violent embraces of the breaker-jumping.

On coming out of the water, hurry home as quickly as possible. It is unhealthy to stand around in a wet bathing-suit. Moreover, the woman has not yet been created who can make a good impression when she looks like a drowned rat. Your period of exhilaration is over for the day.

EVIDENCE

BY ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH

THOUGH man may seek to hide his inner thought,
That in his soul no human eye may see,
Upon his face a thousand tales are wrought
By unseen workers toiling tirelessly.

SHORT-STORY MASTERPIECES

SECOND SERIES—RUSSIAN

I. SILENCE

By *Leonid Andreyev*

DONE INTO ENGLISH BY JOHN COURNOS, AND WITH
INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

LEONID ANDREYEV, APOSTLE OF THE TERRIBLE

IT is a curious coincidence that the youngest two literatures of the world, American and Russian, should each have contributed so materially to the development of the short-story. During the eighteenth century American literature was compassing a slow growth; but in Russia, literature was sleeping. Later, both come to effective expression, and at about the same time. While Irving, Hawthorne, Poe, Harte, Stockton, James, and O. Henry were telling wonderful stories in our land, Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenev, Tolstoi, Gorky, Tchekov, and Andreyev were doing the like in Russia—the balance dips toward America for literary art, but for sheer strength it unmistakably drops on the side of the Slav.

The nineteenth century and after is the only period in Russian literature that is national, and therefore significant; and throughout that period the short-story has been a form to be reckoned with in any adequate estimate of Russian writers. At least five of these will be included in this series, which it seems best to open with the latest to win international notice.

Of contemporary Russian fictionists, Leonid Nikolaevich Andreyev rises largest with promise. Just past forty, he has for fourteen years been producing work of strength and individual flavor, and, now that Tolstoi is gone, his place is probably ahead of even Maxime Gorky—at least, he is *primus inter pares*.

Andreyev's life is best told in his own brief words:

I was born in 1871, in Oryol, and studied there at the gymnasium. I studied poorly: while in the seventh class I was for a whole year known as the worst student, and my mark for conduct was never higher than 4, sometimes 3. The most pleasant time spent in school, which I recall to this day with pleasure, was recess time between the lectures,

and also the rare occasions when I was sent out from the class-room. The sunbeams which penetrated some cleft, and which played with the dust in the hallway—all this was so mysterious, so interesting, so full of a peculiar, hidden meaning.

When I studied at the gymnasium my father, an engineer, died, and while at the university I was in dire need. During my first year at the St. Petersburg University I even starved—not so much out of real necessity as because of my youth, inexperience, and inability to utilize the unnecessary parts of my costume. I am to this day ashamed to think that I went without food at a time when I had two or three pairs of trousers, two overcoats, and the like.

It was then that I wrote my first story—about a starving student. I cried when I wrote it, and the editor who returned my manuscript—laughed. That story of mine remained unpublished.

In 1894 I made an unsuccessful attempt to kill myself by shooting. As a result of this unsuccessful attempt, I was forced by the authorities into religious penitence, and I contracted heart trouble, though not of a serious nature, yet very annoying. During this time I made one or two unsuccessful attempts at writing. I devoted myself with greater pleasure and success to painting, which I loved from childhood on. I made portraits to order at three and five rubles apiece.

In 1897 I received my diploma and became an assistant attorney, but I was sidetracked at the very outset of my career. I was offered a position on the *Courier*, for which I was to report court proceedings. I did not succeed in securing any practice as a lawyer. I had but one case, and lost it at every point.

In 1898 I wrote my first story—for the Easter number—and since then I have devoted myself exclusively to literature. Maxime Gorky helped me considerably in my literary work by his always practical advice and suggestions.

The anecdote is told that when this first story was published Gorky telegraphed the *Courier*, "Who is it who hides himself under the pseudonym of Leonid Andreyev?" And later, when the Russian *Life* issued another of his stories, the poet Mereschkowsky asked if Andreyev was the pseudonym of Gorky or of Tchékov.

But Andreyev is best to be studied through his writings.

"The Friend" is an effective bit of impressionism which must have driven countless thousands to repentant kindness toward neglected animals.

Vladimir is the typical young Russian—a promising writer, wrapped up in his work, and safely past the period of gay carousing. At night he returns to his room and his "only friend," Vasyuk, a little black-haired dog, who adores his master. "My friend, my only friend," are words often on Vladimir's lips, but at length he comes to love Natalia, and Vasyuk gets his favorite dish of liver less often. One day the dog is taken ill, but in his haste to visit Natalia, Vladimir does not take Vasyuk to the veterinary. By and by it is too late. In months to come, Vladimir fails to make good his literary promise, and—

... then, like the cover of a coffin, heavy, dead oblivion fell upon him.

The woman had also forsaken him; she too considered herself deceived.

The fume, vaporous nights went by, also the mercilessly punishing white days, and often, more often than before ... he lay in his bed ... and whispered:

"My friend, my only friend!"

And his quivering hand fell faintly upon the empty place.

From the foregoing, and even more from that which follows, we may conclude it to be a peculiar property of the sketch-form in fiction that its story may not be told in synopsis. Indeed, in the true sketch there is no story. Atmosphere, character-drawing, swift outlining of a situation, impressions of mood and feeling—all these permeate the sketch; but crises in human lives, complications arising therefrom, and the untangling of the plotted skein—these belong to the short-story and the novel.

For this reason much of Andrejev's shorter work defies our efforts to retell it; one must go to the writer himself for his final phrase, his subtly suggested situation, his almost uncanny evocation of mood. "Valia," for example, is one of his sketches which baffle the second-hand narrator: as well try to reconstruct an old-time beauty by dressing up a lay-figure in hand-me-downs.

Valia is a sensitive child who is awakened from his unconscious joy in home by the hard, prickling kisses of a thin-lipped, long-necked woman who announces herself to be his mother. Indignantly, yet politely, the lad turns for denial to his supposed mother, rosy and sweet-lipped, but she tearfully confirms the claim—he had been abandoned in babyhood when he was inconvenient, but now that the mother was lonely she claimed the child. The impending separation tears the hearts of foster-father and -mother and the child himself. Valia becomes nervous, fearful of the dark, and pines almost to illness. But joy and new health come to them all when the courts, which have been invoked to aid the unnatural mother, decide against her claim. At length, however, the highest tribunal reverses the lower court, and the child must go away. The final scene leaves the real mother weeping because her stranger-child takes no pleasure in playthings. The situation is symbolical, for that is the only appeal a sordid, self-serving woman knows how to make to a spirituelle child who has drawn his spirituality not from her nature, but—who knows whence, if not from the heart of his foster-mother! And when the child at the last timidly approaches the weeping egoist and with gentle dignity promises to love her "all he can," we see a triumph of impressionistic sketch-work.

Even more difficult to outline is "The Man Who Found the Truth." It is the story told by himself of a man who at sixty is released from an unjust imprisonment, after having been convicted years before of

murdering several members of his family in order to gain an inheritance. But when he realizes the stress of his old life out in the world, he has his room transformed into a model of his old cell, hires a keeper from his prison, and once more returns to a tranquil life. Its *leit-motif* is strikingly like that of Pierre Loti's "The Wall Opposite."

The last cry in mysticism is Andreyev's "A Story Which Will Never Be Finished." Seek to lay your finger upon its precise meaning and it flutters away like a gauzy-winged visitant; and yet every progressing line deepens an impression upon the soul. It is a pervasive, atmospheric thing, full of mysterious movements, potent though nameless—breaths of uncharted freedom whisper of an impinging world where our realities are unreal; sleeping senses, hitherto unsuspected, strangely stir to their awakening, yet they do not actually awaken. Is it war, is it death opening out into life, is it emancipation—one does n't quite know; yet it is all of these. Hawthorne was never more vaguely pregnant, and Poe never more perfectly conveyed the sense of an unnamed something which is just about to be.

Here indeed Andreyev is like Poe. Now and then I hear him called "The Russian Poe." The epithet is not satisfactory. Something of our American poet there is in the Russian, for both, like Hawthorne, are masters of introspection, and both know the ritual of fantasy as past-masters, but when Andreyev depicts the weird there is always a basis of human reality. Poe could harrow the soul with a sense of fantastic horrors impending, but Andreyev need only draw aside the curtains and show us truth unadorned, truth unrelieved by truth's beautiful other half, and a deeper shudder rocks the soul than ever chilled the flesh at Poe's phantasmagoric evocations. Really, this young titan is two men—one mystical like Hawthorne, a vein of melancholy in his pessimism, but sympathetic withal, and showing more pity for his characters than the realistic school approves. The other fairly makes revel with the gibbering images of war, abnormalities of soul rise and take on flesh at his bidding, and there is no spirit so gloomy, wicked, and repellent but he can conjure it into being for these terrible story-pictures. Which will be the artist's final mood, one may not surely forecast. In either extreme he is not his best self, one may surmise. Certainly we should deplore the constant choice of a theme like that of "The Abyss," his first important story, in which the love of a pure lad for a spotless girl is transformed into a vicious thing that leads at length to a revolting crime. At the other end of the gamut sounds the author's idealistic note. "To the Stars," his first drama, is as far removed in tone from "The Abyss" as the titles indicate. But Andreyev's dramas are worthy of a separate study.

Doubtless the mantle of fatalism which dropped from the shoulders of Turgenev and Tolstoi successively will some day be discarded by Russia's younger prophets. Nietzsche influences Andreyev strongly,

but so do the former great Russian novelists; is it too much to expect that a spirit of hope may yet penetrate the heart of this genius who is still young? Just now the revolution is outwardly cowed, anticipation of better things has been rebuffed; but the spirit of progress rising everywhere else is not for nought, and out of the very blackness painted by Russia's realists must come a determined and successful struggle for vital reforms. Think of a student body of which the recent Congress of Pathology at Moscow could report:

They all drink, the students, the collegians, and even the pupils of the primary schools. There are a great number of alcoholics among children of from seven to ten years of age. In the government of Perm, all the students in the primary school, without exception, drink vodka. In Livonia, 72 per cent. of the school children drink systematically. At Moscow, 64 per cent. are given up to the vice.

These facts, on Russian authority, make one accept the essential truth of Andreyev's terrible revelations of depraved student life in his recent play, "The Days of Our Life." If only this black realism be accepted as the prophet's warning, its revolting character will be not without justification. It is, however, a paradoxical seer who can in his play, "Black Masks," ridicule the spiritual struggle between darkness and light, and yet write to an admirer that he finds in the Bible the greatest teacher of all.

Four of Andreyev's longer stories deserve more than mere mention. "A Dilemma," sometimes called "Thought," which conforms to the Russian title, *Mysl* (1902), is a long short-story. It is a remarkable psychological study of Kerzhentsev, a physician, who hovers between sanity and madness. In spite of his superb endowments of body and mind, he becomes obsessed with the desire to murder his best friend, Savelov, merely because Savelov had married the woman whom the physician desired. This murder he determines to commit under two conditions—the murder shall be known to the victim's wife, yet the perpetrator must escape punishment. One night, while dining with the Savelovs, the doctor feigns a sort of mad fit, but for a whole month craftily does not renew the pretense. At length Kerzhentsev propounds his problem to his intended victim in a veiled way, and the victim argues that with a heavy metal paper-weight one might crush a man's head, and bids the doctor go through such an action in dumb show. But the wife protests against such risks, for she has had a presentiment of evil. Soon after this the doctor actually does crush the head of Savelov, and in the confusion slips away to his home. Just as he is falling asleep, delighted with the success of his plan, a thought languidly enters his brain, as though a voice issued from another: *It is very possible that Dr. Kerzhentsev is really insane. He thought that he simulated, but he is really insane—insane at this very instant.*

Thus begins the terrible dilemma, "for he is fighting against himself for his own reason." At length to save himself from the madhouse he confesses to the judges that he is not mad, but a criminal deserving of punishment.

The Red Laugh (1904), which has been translated into German, French, and English, is Andreyev's most terrible piece of realism. If this inspired picture of the Manchurian war is true, and one feels that it is, General Sherman was conservative. Those who thrill at war pictures and feel the power of patriotism in the call of battle will not enjoy the bloody horror of *The Red Laugh*. The story is a service—of the heroic remedy sort—which Andreyev renders to the cause of peace. Naked, lustful, scheming war, hellish and brutal: that is the Russian's picture—like Wiertz in his mad paintings of blood and torment. The title takes itself naturally from an incident which the narrator, an officer, tells early in the book, how that a young volunteer approaches him with a countenance so intensely white that the officer asks, "Are you afraid?" With that the young man's face bursts into the red laugh.

... Sidorov fell suddenly to the ground and stared at me in silence, with great, terrified eyes. Out of his mouth poured a stream of blood.

It was the red laugh, frightful, unspeakable.

Judas Iscariot and the Others (1907) is a short novel truly notable for its unique motif—the traitorous apostle is not inspired to betray Jesus by mercenary motives, but in order to force the Master to manifest his power and demonstrate his Divinity. Thus were Judas a high-minded patriot instead of a contemptible bribe-taker.

The Seven Who Were Hanged (1907) is Andreyev's most distinguished work. As a novel, it is sincere, powerful, and provocative. Whatever one's views of the death penalty for crime, the author makes a tremendous appeal to pity. Here are seven condemned ones who are to suffer "the horror and the iniquity of capital punishment," and they surely are of "all sorts and conditions," from Musya, whose large womanhood flows, a sustaining stream, to the least of her fellow victims, down to that miserable one whose inert soul suffers less than his brutalized body. The identity of each is not lost for a moment in the circumstances and occupations of imprisonment, nor yet in the midnight journey to the hanging place. They are individual, yet they are pitifully types. Oh, the sadness of it—we feel that to be the burden of the author's soul, and so it becomes our own. It is a poignant, fearful picture, depressing and relentless, but more deeply imbued with pity than anything else Andreyev has written.

"Silence," which was published in 1900, and is therefore one of our author's earliest stories, is a sketch whose iterant impressionism is felt in every line.

SILENCE

(MOLCHANÏE)

I.

IT was a moonlight night in May, and the nightingales were singing, when the wife of Father Ignatius entered his chamber. Her countenance expressed suffering, and the little lamp she held in her hand trembled. Approaching her husband, she touched his shoulder, and managed to say between her sobs:

"Father, let us go to Verochka!"

Without turning his head, Father Ignatius glanced severely at his wife over the rims of his spectacles, and looked long and intently, till she waved her unoccupied hand and dropped on a low divan.

"That one toward the other should be so pitiless!" she pronounced slowly, with emphasis on the final syllables, and her good plump face was distorted with a grimace of pain and exasperation, as if thus she would express what stern people they were—her husband and daughter.

Father Ignatius smiled and arose. Closing his book, he took off his spectacles, put them in the case, and meditated. His long black beard, inwoven with silver threads, lay dignified on his breast, and slowly heaved at every deep breath.

"Well, let us go," said he.

Olga Stepanovna quickly arose and entreated in an appealing, timorous voice:

"Only, don't revile her, Father! You know the sort she is."

Vera's chamber was in the attic, and the narrow, wooden stair bent and creaked under the heavy tread of Father Ignatius. Tall and ponderous, he bent his head to avoid striking the floor of the upper story, and frowned disdainfully when the white jacket of his wife brushed his face. Well, he knew that nothing would come of their talk with Vera.

"Why do you come?" asked Vera, raising a bared arm to her eyes. The other arm lay on top of a white summer blanket, hardly distinguishable from the fabric, so white, translucent, and cold was its aspect.

"Verochka——" began her mother, but, sobbing, she grew silent.

"Vera," said her father, making an effort to soften his dry and hard voice—"Vera, tell us, what troubles you?"

Vera was silent.

"Vera, do not your mother and I deserve your confidence? Do we not love you? And is there some one nearer to you than we? Tell us about your sorrow, and, take the word of an experienced old man,

you'll feel better for it. And we too. Look at your aged mother, how much she suffers!"

"Verochka!"

"And I——" The dry voice trembled, truly something had broken in it. "And I—do you think I find it easy? As if I did not see that some sorrow is gnawing at you—and what is it? And I, your father, do not know what it is. Do you think that right?"

Vera was silent. Father Ignatius very cautiously stroked his beard, as if afraid that his fingers would enmesh themselves involuntarily in it, and continued:

"Against my wish you went to St. Petersburg—did I pronounce a curse upon you, you who disobeyed me? Or did I deny you money? Or, perhaps, I have not been kind? Well, why, then, are you silent? There, you've had your St. Petersburg!"

Father Ignatius became silent, and there loomed before him an image of something huge, granite, and terrible, full of invisible dangers and of strange and indifferent people. And it was there that, alone and weak, his Vera had gone, and it was there they had lost her. An awful hatred against that terrible and mysterious city arose in the soul of Father Ignatius, and an anger against his daughter, who was silent—obstinately silent.

"St. Petersburg has nothing to do with it," said Vera morosely, and closed her eyes. "And nothing is the matter with me. Better go to bed, it is late."

"Verochka, my child," whimpered her mother, "do tell me!"

"*Akh*, Mamma!" Vera impatiently interrupted her.

Father Ignatius sat down on a chair and laughed.

"Well, then, it's nothing?" he inquired ironically.

"Father," sharply ejaculated Vera, raising herself from the pillow, "you know that I love you and Mother. Well, I do feel a little weary. But that will pass. Do go to sleep, and I also wish to sleep. And to-morrow, or some other time, we'll have a chat."

Father Ignatius arose so impetuously that the chair hit the wall, and he took his wife's hand.

"Let us go."

"Verochka!"

"Let us go, I tell you!" shouted Father Ignatius. "If she has forgotten God, shall we——"

Almost forcibly he led Olga Stepanovna out of the room, and when they descended the stairs, his wife, decreasing her gait, said in a harsh whisper:

"It was you, priest, who have made her such! From you she learned her ways. And you'll answer for it. *Akh*, unhappy creature that I am!"

She burst into tears, and, as her vision grew dim, her foot, missing a step, would descend with a sudden jolt, as if she were eager to fall into some abyss which waited below.

From that day Father Ignatius ceased to speak to his daughter, but she seemed not to notice it. As before, she lay in her room, or walked about, continually with the palms of her hands wiping her eyes, as if they contained some irritating foreign substance. And, crushed between these two silent people, the jolly, fun-loving wife of the priest quailed and seemed lost, not knowing what to say or do.

Occasionally Vera took a stroll. A week after the interview she went out in the evening, as was her habit. She was not seen again alive, as that night she threw herself under the train, and it cut her in two.

Father Ignatius himself directed the funeral. His wife was not present in church, for at the news of Vera's death she was prostrated by a stroke. She lost control of her feet, hands, and tongue, and when the church-bells rang out she lay motionless in the half-darkened room. She heard the people intone the chants as they issued out of church and passed the house, and she made an effort to raise her hand to make the sign of the cross, but her hand refused to obey; she wished to say, "Farewell, Vera!" but the tongue lay in her mouth huge and heavy. And her attitude was so calm that it gave one an impression of restfulness, or of sleep. Only, her eyes remained open.

At the funeral, in church, were many people who knew Father Ignatius, and many strangers; all bewailed Vera's terrible death, and tried to detect in the movements and voice of Father Ignatius tokens of a deep sorrow. They did not love Father Ignatius, because of his severity and proud manners, his scorn of sinners, his unforgiving spirit, his envy and covetousness, his habit of utilizing every opportunity to extort money from his parishioners. They all wished to see him suffer, to see his spirit broken, to see him conscious in his two-fold guilt for the death of his daughter—as a cruel father and a bad priest—incapable of preserving his own flesh from sin. They cast searching glances at him, and he, feeling these glances directed toward his back, made efforts to hold erect its broad and strong expanse, and his thoughts were not concerning his dead daughter, but concerning his own dignity.

"A hardened priest!" with a shake of his head said Karzenoff, a carpenter, to whom Father Ignatius owed five rubles for frames.

And thus, hard and erect, Father Ignatius reached the burial-ground; and in the same manner he returned. Only at the door of his wife's chamber did his backbone relax a little, but this may have been due to the fact that the height of the door was insufficient to admit his tall figure. The change from broad daylight made it hard for him to distinguish the face of his wife, but, after scrutiny, he was astonished at its calmness, and because the eyes showed no tears. And there was

neither anger nor sorrow in the eyes—they were dumb, though they kept silent with difficulty, reluctantly, as did the entire round and helpless body that pressed against the feather bedding.

"Well, how do you feel?" inquired Father Ignatius.

But the lips were dumb; the eyes too were silent. Father Ignatius laid his hand on her forehead; it was cold and moist, and Olga Step-anovna did not show in any way that she had felt the contact of the hand. When Father Ignatius removed his hand there gazed at him, immobile, two deep gray eyes, from the dilated pupils seeming almost entirely dark, and there was neither sadness in them nor anger.

"I am going into my own room," said Father Ignatius, who began to feel cold and terror.

He passed through the drawing-room, where, as usual, everything appeared neat and in order, and where, attired in white covers, stood tall chairs, like corpses in their shrouds. In one window hung an empty wire cage, with the door open.

"Nastasya!" shouted Father Ignatius. His own voice seemed to him coarse, and he felt ill at ease because he raised it to so high a pitch in these silent rooms, so soon after his daughter's funeral.

"Nastasya," he called more softly, "where is the canary?"

"It flew away, to be sure."

"Why did you let it out?"

Nastasya began to weep, and, wiping her face with the edges of her calico headkerchief, said through her tears:

"It was my young mistress's soul. Was it right to hold it?"

And it seemed to Father Ignatius that the happy little yellow canary, always singing with side-tilted head, was actually the soul of Vera, and if it had not flown away it would n't have been possible to say that Vera had died. He became even more incensed at the maid-servant and shouted:

"Off with you!"

And because Nastasya did not vanish on the instant he added:

"Fool!"

II.

FROM the day of the funeral, silence reigned in the little house. It was not stillness, for stillness is merely the absence of sounds; it was silence, because it seemed that they who were silent could speak but would not. So thought Father Ignatius each time he entered his wife's chamber and met that obstinate gaze, so heavy in its aspect that it seemed to transform the very air into lead, which bore down one's head and spine. So thought he, examining his daughter's music sheets, which bore marks of her voice work, and also her books and her por-

trait, which she had brought with her from St. Petersburg. Father Ignatius never deviated from the following order when scrutinizing the portrait: First, he would gaze on the cheek upon which a strong light had been thrown by the painter; in his fancy he would see upon it a slight wound, which he had noticed on Vera's cheek in death, and the source of which mystified him. More than once he meditated upon causes, and each time he reasoned that if it had been made by the train the entire skull would have been crushed, whereas the head of Vera remained wholly untouched.

It was possible that some one had done it with his foot when the body was being lifted, or accidentally with a finger nail.

The details of Vera's death, contemplated at length, taxed the strength of Father Ignatius, so that he would soon pass on to the eyes. These were dark, handsome, with long lashes that cast deep shadows beneath, causing the whites to seem particularly luminous, both eyes appearing to be inclosed in black mourning frames. A strange expression had been given them by the unknown but talented artist; it seemed as if in the space between the eyes and the object upon which they gazed lay a thin, transparent film. It resembled somewhat the effect made by an imperceptible layer of dust on the black top of a piano, softening the shine of polished wood. And no matter how Father Ignatius placed the portrait, the eyes insistently followed him, but there was no speech in them, only silence; and this silence was so clear that it seemed it could be heard. Gradually Father Ignatius began to think that he heard silence.

Every morning after breakfast the priest would enter the drawing-room, take in at a rapid glance the empty cage and the other familiar objects, and, seating himself in the armchair, would close his eyes and listen to the silence of the house. There was something grotesque about this. The cage kept silence, stilly and tenderly, and in this silence were felt sorrow and tears, and distant dead laughter. The silence of his wife, deepened by the walls, continued insistent, heavy as lead, and terrible, so terrible that on the hottest day Father Ignatius would be seized with cold shivers. Continuous and frigid as the grave, and mysterious as death, was the silence of his daughter. The silence itself seemed to share this suffering and struggled, as it were, with the terrible desire to pass into speech; something strong and cumbersome, as a machine, held it motionless, however, and stretched it out as a wire. And somewhere at the distant end, the wire would begin to agitate and resound subduedly, feebly, and plaintively. With joy, yet with terror, Father Ignatius would seize upon this engendered sound, and, resting with his arms upon the arm of the chair, would lean his head forward, waiting for the sound to reach him. But it would break and pass into silence.

"How stupid!" muttered Father Ignatius angrily, arising from the chair, still erect and tall. Through the window he saw, suffused with sunlight, the street paved with round, even-sized stones, and, directly across, the stone wall of a long, windowless shed. On the corner stood a cab-driver, looking like a clay statue, and it was difficult to understand why he stood there, when for hours there was not a single passer-by.

III.

FATHER IGNATIUS had occasion for considerable speech outside his house. There was talking to be done with the clergy, with the members of his flock, while officiating at ceremonies, sometimes with acquaintances at social evenings; yet, upon his return he would feel invariably that the entire day he had been silent. This was due to the fact that with none of those people could he talk upon the matter which concerned him most, and upon which he would reflect each night: Why did Vera die?

Father Ignatius did not seem to realize that now this could not be known, and thought that it was still possible to know. Each night—all his nights had become sleepless—he would re-experience that moment when he and his wife, at dead midnight, had stood near Vera's bed, and he had entreated her: "Tell us!" And when in his recollection he would reach these words, the rest appeared to him not as it was in reality. His closed eyes, preserving in their darkness a live, undimmed picture of that night, saw how Vera raised herself in her bed, smiled, and tried to say something. But what was it she had tried to say? That unuttered word of Vera's, which would have solved all, seemed so near that if one only had bent his ear and suppressed the beats of his heart, one could have heard it—and at the same time it was so infinitely, so hopelessly distant. Father Ignatius would arise from his bed, stretch forth his wringing hands, and cry:

"Vera!"

And he would be answered by silence.

One evening Father Ignatius entered the chamber of Olga Stepanovna, whom he had not come to see for a week, seated himself at her head, and, turning away from that insistent, heavy gaze, said:

"Mother, I wish to talk to you about Vera? Do you hear?"

Her eyes were silent, and Father Ignatius, raising his voice, spoke sternly and powerfully, as he was accustomed to speak to penitents:

"I am aware that you are under the impression that I have been the cause of Vera's death. Reflect, however, did I love her less than you loved her? You reason absurdly. I have been stern; did that prevent her from doing as she wished? I forfeited the dignity of a

father, I humbly bent my neck, when she defied my malediction and departed—hence. And you—did you not plead with her to remain, did you not weep, old woman, until I commanded you to be silent? Did I beget cruelty in her? Did I not teach her about God, about humility, about love?”

Father Ignatius quickly glanced into the eyes of his wife, and turned away.

“What was there for me to do when she refused to reveal her sorrow? Did I not command her? Did I not entreat her? I suppose, in your opinion, I should have dropped on my knees before the girl, and cried like an old woman! How should I have known what was going on in her head! Cruel, heartless daughter!”

Father Ignatius came down on his knee with his fist.

“There was no love in her—that’s what! As far as I’m concerned, that’s settled, of course—I’m a tyrant! Perhaps she loved you—you who wept and humbled yourself?”

Father Ignatius gave a hollow laugh.

“There’s love for you! And as a solace for you, what a death she chose! A cruel, ignominious death. She died in the dust, in the dirt—as a d-dog who is kicked in the jaw.”

The voice of Father Ignatius sounded low and hoarse:

“I feel ashamed! Ashamed to go out in the street! Ashamed before the altar! Ashamed before God! Cruel, undeserving daughter! Accurst in thy grave!”

When Father Ignatius glanced at his wife she was unconscious; she came to only after several hours. When she regained consciousness her eyes maintained their silence, and it was impossible to tell whether or not she remembered what Father Ignatius had said.

That very night—it was a moonlit, calm, warm, deathly-still night in May—Father Ignatius, proceeding on his tip-toes so as not to be overheard by his wife and the sick-nurse, climbed up the stairs and entered Vera’s room. The window in the attic had remained closed since the death of Vera, and the air was dry and warm, with a light odor of burning that comes from heat generated during the day in the iron roof. Long unvisited, an atmosphere of lifelessness and forsakenness permeated the apartment, while the timber of the walls, the furniture, and other objects gave forth a slight odor of active decay. The moonlight streamed in through the window, and its reflections on the white floor cast a dim light into the corners of the room, while the white, clean bed, with two pillows, one large and one small, seemed phantom-like and aerial. Father Ignatius opened the window, causing a considerable current of fresh air to pour into the room, smelling of dust, of the nearby river, and of the blooming linden. An indistinct

sound as of voices in chorus also drifted in occasionally; evidently young people were rowing and singing.

Resembling a white phantom, Father Ignatius made his way noiselessly, in bare feet, to the empty bed, bent his knees and fell face down on the pillows, embracing them—on that spot where Vera's face should have been. Long he lay thus; the song grew louder, then died out; but he still lay there, while his long black hair spread over his shoulders and the bed.

The moon had changed its position, and the room grew darker, when Father Ignatius raised his head and murmured, charging his voice with the entire strength of his long-suppressed and unconscious love, and hearkening to his own words, as if it were not he who was listening, but Vera.

"Vera, my daughter! Do you understand what you are to me, daughter? Little daughter! My heart, my blood, and my life. Your father—your old father—is already gray, and also feeble."

The shoulders of Father Ignatius shook, and the entire burdened figure became convulsed. Suppressing his agitation, Father Ignatius murmured tenderly, as to an infant:

"Your old father entreats you. No, little Vera, he supplicates. He weeps. He never has wept before. Your sorrow, little child, your sufferings—they are also mine. Greater than mine."

Father Ignatius shook his head.

"Greater, Verochka. What is death to an old man like me? But you—if you only knew how delicate and weak and timid you are! Do you recall how you bruised your finger once and the blood trickled and you cried a little? My child! I know that you love me, love me intensely. Every morning you kiss my hand. Tell me, do tell me, what grief troubles your little head, and I—with these hands—shall smother your grief. They are still strong, Vera, these hands."

The hair of Father Ignatius shook.

"Tell me!"

Father Ignatius fixed his eyes on the wall, and wrung his hands.

"Tell me!"

Stillness prevailed in the room, and from afar was heard the prolonged, interrupted whistle of a locomotive.

Father Ignatius, gazing out of his dilated eyes, as if there had suddenly arisen before him the frightful phantom of the mutilated corpse, slowly raised himself from his knees, and, making an incredulous motion, reached for his head with his hand, with spread and tensely stiffened fingers. Making a step toward the door, Father Ignatius whispered brokenly:

"Tell me!"

And he was answered by silence.

IV.

THE next day, after an early and lonely dinner, Father Ignatius went to the graveyard, for the first time since his daughter's death. It was warm, deserted, and still; it seemed more like a brilliantly clear night. Following habit, Father Ignatius straightened his back with effort, looked severely about him, and thought that he was the same as formerly; he was conscious neither of the new, terrible weakness in his legs, nor that his long beard had become entirely white, as if a hard frost had hit it. The road to the graveyard led through a long, direct street, slightly on an upward incline, and at its termination loomed the arch of the graveyard gate, resembling a dark, perpetually open mouth, edged with glistening teeth.

Vera's grave was situated in the depth of the grounds, where the sandy little pathways ended, and for a considerable time Father Ignatius was obliged to blunder along the narrow footpaths which led in a broken line between green mounds, forgotten and abandoned by all. Here and there appeared sloping tombstones, green with age, broken railings, and large, heavy stones planted in the ground, and seemingly crushing it with some cruel, ancient spite.

Near one such stone was the grave of Vera. It was covered with fresh turf, turned yellow; around, however, all was in bloom. The ash embraced the maple tree; and the widely spread hazel bush stretched out over the grave its bending branches with their downy, shaggy foliage. Sitting down on a neighboring grave and catching his breath, Father Ignatius looked around him, throwing a glance toward the cloudless expanse of sky, where in complete immobility hung the glowing sun disk—and here he felt only that deep, incomparable stillness which reigns in graveyards, when the wind is absent and the slumbering foliage has ceased its rustling. And anew the thought came to Father Ignatius that this was not a stillness, but a silence. It extended to the very brick walls of the graveyard, crept over them, and occupied the town. And it terminated only—in those gray, obstinate, and persistently silent eyes.

Father Ignatius's shoulders shivered, and he lowered his eyes upon the grave of Vera. He gazed long upon the little tufts of grass uprooted together with the earth from some open, wind-swept field and not successful in adapting themselves to a strange soil; he could not imagine that here, under this grass, only a few feet from him, lay Vera. And this nearness seemed incomprehensible, and brought confusion into the soul, and a strange agitation. She of whom Father Ignatius was accustomed to think as of one passed away forever into the dark depths of eternity was here, close by—and it was hard to understand that nevertheless she was no more and never again would be. And in the

mind's fancy of Father Ignatius it seemed that if he could only utter some word, which was almost upon his lips, or if he could make some sort of movement, Vera would issue forth from her grave and arise to the same height and beauty that was once hers. And not alone would she arise, but all the corpses, intensely sensitive in their solemnly-cold silence.

Father Ignatius removed his wide-brimmed black hat, smoothed down his disarranged hair, and whispered:

"Vera!"

The fear that he might be overheard by a stranger made Father Ignatius feel ill at ease and caused him to look carefully around him as he stepped on the grave. No one was present, and this time he repeated loudly:

"Vera!"

It was the voice of an aged man, sharp and demanding, and it was strange that so powerfully expressed a desire should receive no response.

"Vera!"

Loudly and insistently the voice called, and when it relapsed into silence it seemed for a moment that somewhere from underneath came an incoherent answer. And Father Ignatius, clearing his ear of his long hair, pressed it to the rough, prickly turf.

"Vera, tell me!"

With terror, Father Ignatius felt pouring into his ear something cold as of the grave, which froze his marrow; Vera seemed to be speaking—speaking, however, with the same unbroken silence. This feeling became more racking and terrible, and when Father Ignatius finally forced himself to wrench away his head, his face was as pale as that of a corpse, and he fancied that the entire atmosphere trembled and palpitated from a resounding silence, and that this terrible sea was being swept by a wild hurricane. The silence strangled him; with icy waves it rolled through his head and agitated the hair; it smote against his breast, which groaned under the blows. Trembling from head to foot, casting around him sharp and sudden glances, Father Ignatius slowly raised himself and with a prolonged and torturous effort attempted to straighten his spine and to give proud dignity to his trembling body. He succeeded in this. With measured protractedness, Father Ignatius shook the dirt from his knees, put on his hat, made the sign of the cross three times over the grave, and walked away with an even and firm gait, not recognizing, however, the familiar burial ground and losing his way.

"Well, here I've gone astray!" smiled Father Ignatius, halting at the branching of the footpaths.

He stood there for a moment, and, unreflecting, turned to the left, because it was impossible to stand and to wait. The silence drove him

on. It arose from the green graves; it was the breath issuing from the gray, melancholy crosses; in thin, stifling currents it came from all pores of the earth, satiated with the dead. Father Ignatius increased his stride. Dizzy, he circled the same paths, jumped over graves, stumbled across railings, clutching with his hands the prickly, metallic garlands, and tearing the soft material of his dress into tatters. His sole thought was to escape. He fled from one place to another, and finally broke into a dead run, seeming very tall and unusual in the flowing cassock, and his hair streaming in the wind. A corpse arisen from the grave could not have frightened a passer-by more than this wild figure of a man, running and leaping, and waving his arms, his face distorted and insane, and the open mouth breathing with a dull, hoarse sound. With one long leap, Father Ignatius landed on a little street, at one end of which appeared the small church attached to the graveyard. At the entrance, on a low bench, dozed an old man, seemingly a distant pilgrim, and near him, assailing each other, were two quarrelling old beggar women, filling the air with their oaths.

When Father Ignatius reached his home, it was already dusk, and there was light in Olga Stepanovna's chamber. Not waiting to undress, or even to remove his hat, Father Ignatius, dusty and tattered, approached his wife and fell on his knees.

"Mother . . . Olga . . . have pity on me!" he wept. "I shall go mad."

He beat his head against the edge of the table, and he wept with anguish, as one who was weeping for the first time. Then he raised his head, confident that a miracle would come to pass, that his wife would speak and would pity him.

"My love!"

With his entire big body he drew himself toward his wife—and met the gaze of those gray eyes. There was neither compassion in them, nor anger. It was possible his wife had forgiven him, but in her eyes there was neither pity nor anger. They were dumb and silent.

And silent was the entire dark, deserted house.



THE MORTGAGE BANK

By Edward Sherwood Meade, Ph.D.

IN the May issue, under the title of "Six Per Cent on the Land," appeared a brief discussion of the advantages of the farm mortgage as an investment. The conclusion there expressed was that a properly selected farm mortgage combines the merits of first-class security and a high rate of interest. Its only disadvantage is limited convertibility. It is my purpose this month to discuss some of the reasons which have heretofore interfered with the growth of the farm mortgage to its proper position in the investment field.

Productive land furnishes the ultimate security for the investor. Outside of the mining industry, which contributes but little to the supply of investment securities, all other forms of investment rest directly or indirectly upon the farms. Railway traffic comes mainly from the farms, and yet there has been little utilization of the farms themselves as a basis of investment. In round numbers, the railroads of the United States are worth \$20,000,000,000. This entire value is outstanding in the hands of the investors in the form of stocks and bonds. The amount of securities issued by industrial corporations is probably greater than the value of the property which these companies own. Public service corporations are fully represented by investment securities. It is only in the field of real estate, and particularly farm real estate, that investments still lag far behind value.

According to the census, there are in the United States 6,361,502 farms, containing a total of 878,798,000 acres. The total value of this farm property is estimated at \$40,991,000,000, of which over two thirds represents the value of the land, one sixth the value of the buildings, and one sixth the combined value of the improvements, machinery, and live stock. The total value of this farm property has more than doubled during the decade 1900 to 1910. The increase in farm land alone has been 118.1%. The average value per acre of the American farm increased from \$15.57 in 1900 to \$32.40 in 1910. The explanation of this phenomenal increase in land values is found in the fact that while the total population increased 21% since 1900, the urban population increased 34.8%, and the rural population only 11.2%. The number and acreage of farms increased much less rapidly than the total population. As a consequence of this steadily growing demand from cities and

towns for food supply, the value of farm products has been rapidly advancing, and this has made agriculture the most profitable occupation in the United States.

This great industry, however, is but little known to the investor. The savings banks and insurance companies, and, to a less extent, commercial banks and trust companies, have realized the value of the perfect security which the farm mortgage offers, but to the individual investor in the East these advantages are almost unknown. Out of this \$41,000,000,000 of value, it is doubtful if 10% is represented by investment securities. It is unfortunate for the United States that this is the case. The great problem before the American people to-day is the rising cost of living. However economists may wrangle about the ultimate underlying cause of the advance of the price of bread and meat, the plain and evident explanation of this fact is that there is too little bread and too little meat. The only cure for the high prices of food is to produce more food. The production of food is very largely a matter of the investment of capital. The time of free land with soil six feet deep, which would produce 20 crops of grain in succession without fertilizer, is past. An extension of the farming industry of the United States to-day means costly improvement in drainage and irrigation, it means large expenditures on improved farm buildings, on farm machinery, on fertilizer, and on improved live stock.

The total area of lands in the United States which are to be reclaimed in whole or in part by drainage is estimated at 225,000,000 acres. Of this amount 75,000,000 acres are in swamps entirely unproductive, while 150,000,000 acres include land whose productivity could be increased at least 20% by drainage. This is equal to the combined area of Germany, Great Britain, Belgium, and Holland. It is estimated that it would sustain a population of 125,000,000, and would add \$4,000,000,000 a year to the public wealth of the United States. In Florida alone 18,000,000 acres of land can be reclaimed by drainage.

These impressive figures give some idea of the problem before the American farmer and the American consumer. The farmer must have more capital. Three years ago Mr. James J. Hill aroused much discussion by the statement that the railroads of the United States required a capital investment of \$1,000,000,000 a year for at least five years in order to fit them to handle economically the traffic which would be offered. The needs of the railroads are insignificant compared with the needs of the farms. The crying need of the United States to-day is for larger investment in agriculture. More money put into the farms means a larger output; it means larger earnings for the railroads, on which they can raise the capital which they to-day profess themselves entirely unable to secure on the basis of their present earnings.

The opportunity for profitable investment in the land is especially

marked in the South. Compare, for example, Illinois and Mississippi. The total farm area of Illinois is 32,522,937 acres and of Mississippi 18,557,533 acres. Illinois on the basis of the last figures available had 28,048,323 acres (86.2%) of improved farm land and 4,474,614 acres (13.8%) of unimproved farm land, while Mississippi had 9,008,310 acres (48.5%) of improved and 9,549,223 acres (51.5%) of unimproved farm land. The value of the farm products of Mississippi was only \$102,492,283, as compared with the value of Illinois farm products of \$345,649,611. The soil of Mississippi is much richer, acre for acre, than the soil of Illinois. The amount of irreclaimable land is less. Mississippi has a heavier rainfall, and agricultural operations can be carried on practically throughout the year. The character of the labor supply is an obstacle, but greater agricultural opportunities mean the influx of white population. The main reason why Mississippi was so far below Illinois as a producer of food and raw materials is found in the lack of capital for the development of the agricultural operations in the South. Into the States of the corn belt the money of the Eastern and the European investors has been poured, so far as money has been available for investment in farm lands. These States have profited enormously by the investment of this capital. They still hold out large opportunities for future investment, but in the Northwest, the South, and the Southwest money has only recently been available, and that in small amounts, for investment in farm operations.

The need of a large investment in farm mortgages is evident. Without this investment, the problem of the future food supply is certain to grow more and more perplexing, and yet with the present machinery of farm investment it is unreasonable to expect any large increase in the movement of money into this field. In the May article upon this subject the method of investment in the farm mortgage was explained. The investor in Pennsylvania or in New York must lend \$3,000, \$5,000, or \$10,000 to a man in Oklahoma, or Nebraska, or North Dakota, whom he has never seen, and whom he knows only through the statements made to him by the broker. This loan is for a limited time. At the end of that time the money may be handed back to him, and he will have to make a new investment, shifting and changing from one period to another. If he deals with reliable brokers, whose names he can readily obtain through his local bank, he runs, it is true, no risk of loss, but the form of the investment does not commend itself to him. The Eastern investor is accustomed to purchasing stocks and bonds of the large railroad, industrial, and public service corporations, issued in \$50,000,000, \$100,000,000, and \$200,000,000 lots. In other words, he buys standard securities issued by immensely wealthy corporations, with whose operations and history he has always been familiar, and which he regards as permanent institutions. It is not unnatural that he should prefer a 4½ or 5%

income from a railway bond or railway stock issued by such companies under such conditions, to 6% on a farm mortgage. It is not likely that this prejudice in favor of standard securities will be overcome. The farm mortgage business has been vigorously pushed for many years, and notwithstanding these figures, other fields of investment which have been more recently opened, such, for example, as the industrials, have absorbed several billions of dollars which it would have been to the national interest to put into the farm mortgages. The farm mortgage broker, with his present organization, cannot win the favor of more than a small minority of the investors. If the farm mortgage is to reach the position which it deserves, the organization of the business must be changed; in other words, the institution of the mortgage bank must be established in this country.

The mortgage bank is well known in every country of western Europe. In Germany there are 36 mortgage banks, with capital of \$170,563,000 and combined reserves of \$66,711,400. These banks have \$2,618,000,000 loaned out on mortgages. Against these mortgages, and to obtain the money for this investment, the banks have issued \$2,548,000,000 in bonds. Of this amount \$1,571,000,000 are 4% bonds and \$977,000,000 are 3½ and 3¼% bonds. By standardizing the farm mortgage, the German mortgage banks have been able to sell their bonds on better terms than the American railroads can obtain for their first mortgage securities. The mortgage bank gathers together thousands of individual farm loans, consolidates them into one aggregate security, and upon this security issues a standard bond. In addition to the security of the mortgages, there is the capital and accumulated earnings of the bank. The same institution, although less highly developed, is found in France, Russia, Austria, Italy, and, more recently, in Great Britain. From the standpoint of the borrower, the mortgage bank offers great advantage. The present method of borrowing on farm security is to make a short-term loan, from three to five years. If possible, at maturity, this loan is greatly reduced or paid off, and often money which should properly come into the development of the farm is used to reduce the loan. If the loan cannot be entirely paid off, a new loan must be placed, and this means a commission, and a material increase in the expense. A farmer who renews his mortgage from time to time is fortunate to escape with a total cost of 7½%, on the money which he obtains. The farm mortgage is always looked upon as a burden which often becomes a curse. To pay off the mortgage as soon as possible is the American farmer's ambition.

We find nothing of this kind in the railway field. Railway bonds are never paid off. When they come due they are refunded into new bonds. The investor does not want his money back; he merely wishes security for his income, and as long as that security can be furnished him

he knows that he can obtain the amount of his principal from some other investor, to whom he can pass on the evidence of indebtedness in which he has placed his savings. He would have the same attitude toward the farm mortgage if this were offered to him as a standard security instead of a small loan made on minute security to a stranger. In other words, the borrower from a mortgage bank borrows for long periods—ten, twenty, or thirty years—and in addition to his interest pays each year a small sum to extinguish the principal. He is in precisely the same position as the railroad which borrows money for long periods, expecting the money to stay in the business for its development.

Farm mortgage banking in the United States has been attempted in the past with disastrous results. During the eighties the rapid development of the western portion of the corn belt encouraged many brokers to market the bonds of such companies, secured by Western farm mortgages. A succession of crop failures throughout this region ruined many of these companies. The failure of the Lombard Investment Company, for example, inflicted heavy losses upon the Eastern investors.

As a result of these unfortunate experiences, mortgage banking fell into serious discredit, and it is only recently that interest in the subject has revived. It is to be hoped that in the interest of the nation's prosperity, and in order to place within the investor's reach the soundest of all securities, this institution which has been perfected in Europe shall be speedily introduced into the United States. Certain it is that its introduction, under the proper auspices, would open the way to the American farms not only to the investment funds of the Eastern States, but also to the much larger available capital of Europe.



CULTURE

By Thomas L. Masson

CULTURE may be divided into three classes: Musical, Literary, and Artistic.

Musical Culture is made up of motifs, money, and half-nakedness. In its most virulent form it is seen at Grand Opera.

Literary Culture consists of equal parts of rhapsody, hysterics, toadyism, and simple mania. It is incurable in extreme cases. In the case of young women, a sudden marriage sometimes works wonders.

Artistic Culture is divided into realistic, impressionistic, and mystic. In the realistic, we see things as we think they are; in the impressionistic, as we hope they never will be; in the mystic, we look mysterious and frankly admit that it would be no earthly use to impart to common minds our own superior opinions.